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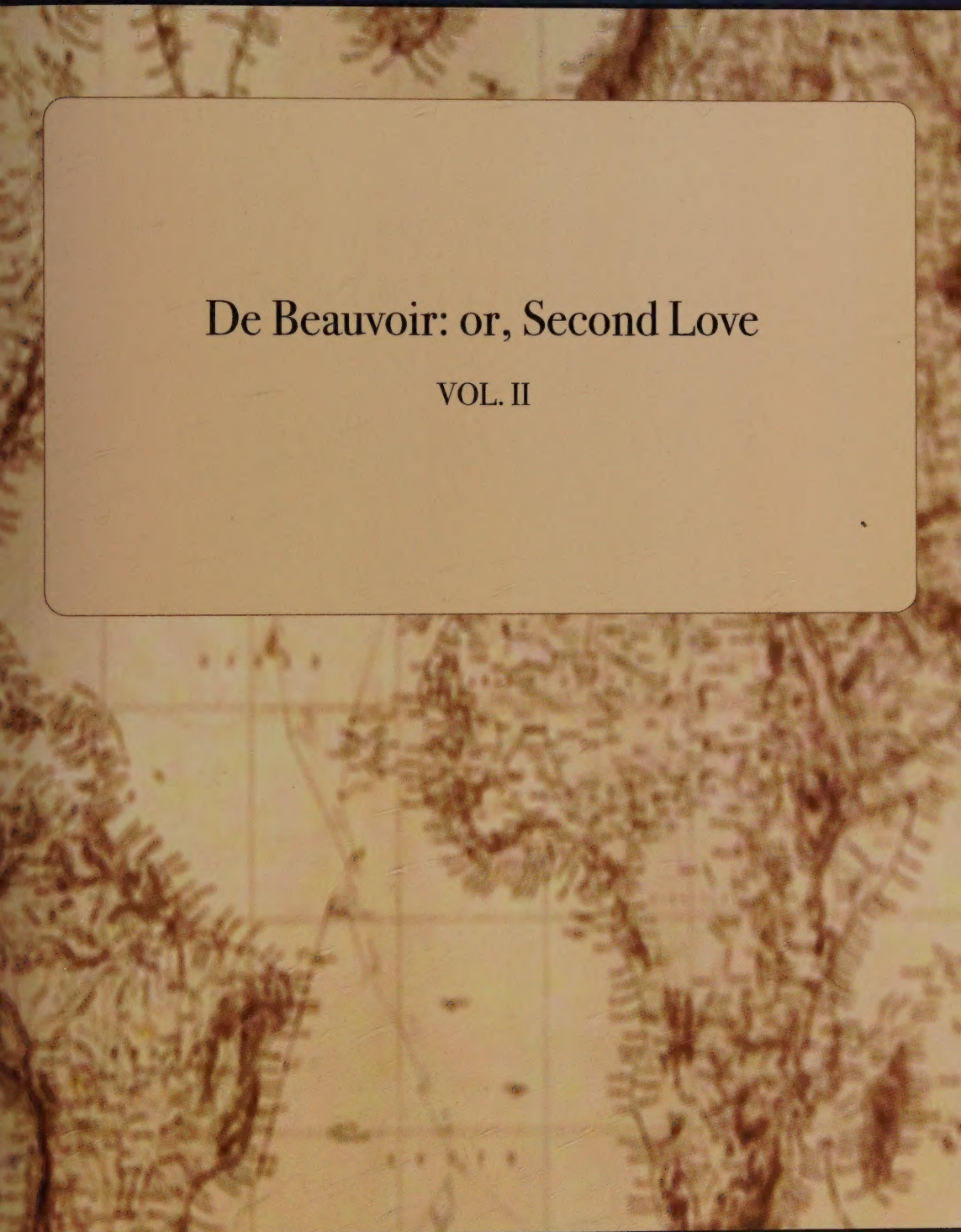

De Beauvoir: or, Second Love

VOL. II

European Literature, 1790-1840: The Corvey Collection

DE BEAUVOIR.

VOL. II.

LONDON
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square

DE BEAUVOIR;

OR,

Second Love.

Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love, as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers

Midsummer Night's Dream

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1828.

FÜRSTLICHE
BIBLIOTHEK
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DE BEAUVOIR,

OR,

SECOND LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

——— "Welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome."

Merchant of Venice.

It was on a cold and dull evening at the end of summer, that a lady of middle age and a fine-looking girl of eighteen were seated, engaged in conversation, in the handsome saloon of a commodious mansion in Yorkshire. The former was a pale, thin, delicate looking woman, with a pensive cast of countenance; the latter — but it is almost enough to say that she

was the daughter of George Cavendish, and that if in infancy she had resembled him, she was the softened picture of him in womanhood. Time, which had robbed many of youth and beauty, and, perhaps, destroyed the happiness of more, had brought with every year another charm for Amelia. Nor did she alone resemble her father in face and form; her mind was the counterpart of his, and his greatest earthly comfort in his hours of sorrow — for sorrow had visited him deeply — was the daughter who loved him, and whose opening talent recalled to him the promise of his own early years.

She was now staying with her uncle's wife, Lady Allondale. Lord Allondale, in the first complacent days of marriage, had listened to the request of his wife, and bought a small but pleasant estate in the neighbourhood of her father's quiet abode; and thither, when those happy days were gone, Lady Allondale loved to repair, and weep over the memory of joy,

in the spot where she had first become acquainted with it.

"Amelia, how I wish I could smile as you do now!" said Lady Allondale, laying down her work, for her eyes were dimmed with tears. "This cold, this cheerless evening makes no difference to you: your gaiety of heart is just the same."

"Well, my dear aunt, and have I not reason to be happy? I have so many friends who love me; so many occupations, so many amusements: a simple walk in the fields exhilarates me; and then there is Frank Leslie! I would rather take a blue bell from Frank Leslie, than a chain of gold from another! Do you know, I think this is a very happy world. If I reflect on that part of my life which is past, I consider myself so fortunate! I owe so much to papa! And when I look forward, I paint so many fairy scenes! There is one thing, however, sometimes crosses my mind; I mean the idea that Frank should ever love another. I am afraid he is not exactly formed for con-

stancy; besides, his company must be so sought after wherever he is known, and there are so many beautiful women in London, so many who would be glad to marry such a man as he is. Don't you think so, my dear aunt?"

"Amelia, you really make me smile, in spite of myself. I dare say there are many women who might have no objection to marry Sir Francis: he is handsome, a man of some fortune, and a baronet; but I believe Sir Francis would marry no woman but Amelia Cavendish. He thinks too so highly of your father!—"

"Every one thinks highly of papa," said Amelia, and her eyes brightened as she spoke. "I wish papa were appointed ambassador to some foreign court, and that I were his secretary in disguise! It would be so delightful; and I should know all that was going on, all the state secrets; I should be behind the curtain, and see all the machinery which set the political world in motion, and I should

be able, now and then, to touch one of the springs myself!"

"Believe me, Amelia," said Lady Allondale, "you would soon get tired of such a life, and sigh for the field and the blue bell you were talking of just now. I must own, however, that you would make as good a secretary as many of those we hear of sometimes."

"As good a one as Mr. Hammond, for instance? Some people fancy he is clever, because he can say severe things. As for me, I shall never think that he is clever, till I find out he is good natured. Do you know I believe Mr. Hammond has taken it into his head to fall in love with me? He in love! What a charming contradiction! What a beautiful variety!—Do you not envy me? Why this is as great a triumph as to 'draw *iron tears down Pluto's cheek*;' and then he is as old as papa, and looks much older. I have never told Frank of his rival; I think I will tell him to-morrow when we go there to dinner."

"I cannot say," replied Lady Allondale, "that I am very partial to Mr. Hammond. I believe if it had not been for him, Colonel Onslow and Mrs. Cavendish would have been married long ago: I know your father thinks so."

"Do you think they will ever marry?" said Amelia. "I am afraid they have been too long about it: though one does hear of such things sometimes. I wonder Mrs. Cavendish did not marry Colonel Onslow the second time he came back from Gibraltar. I have heard papa talk on the subject; and he thinks her grief had by that time changed into resentment. The last time I saw Colonel Onslow was when I was ten years old, just before he went abroad."

A letter was at this moment brought into the room, and delivered to Amelia.

"I suppose," said Lady Allondale, "that letter is from your father; at least your smile says so. We may have some news in that, as he mentioned in his last letter but one, that he was expecting

every day to hear from Colonel Onslow."

"You shall soon be satisfied, my dear aunt," said Amelia; and she read as follows:

"Hill Street, August 15

"My dearest Amelia,—As I know you love to hear from your papa, and as your papa loves to write to you, I have stolen a few minutes from business, with the intention of devoting them to my darling. In the first place, I hope your kind aunt continues as well as she was when you wrote last. Give her my best love, and tell her that she has my free permission to keep you with her till the middle, perhaps the end, of October; and then I am resolute. I miss you very much; more than you can think. I was obliged to come up from Devonshire four days ago. There is, as you may suppose, scarcely any one in town; but if I do fall in with any stray individual in my walks to Westminster, I have such polite, such anxious enquiries after you:—'How is Miss Ca-

vendish?—Have you heard lately from Miss Cavendish?' &c. &c.—So run the enquiries of courtesy. I have finished the translation of the Greek poem. I am making George copy it out, and he gives me his opinion of the sentiments and diction; in short, is a critic as well as a transcriber. He sends his kind remembrances to you. By the by, talking of translations, a gentleman called here yesterday—I will not tell you his name—and showed me a little stanza in Spanish, which he had met with in a book he had been reading. He asked me to beg you to translate it for him. He says he does not understand Spanish, and besides, he should feel honoured by your condescending to furnish him with a translation. I send it enclosed; it is only four lines; and if you can oblige him so easily, I think it would be as well to do it.

"I have some news to tell you. I had a letter from Colonel Onslow this morning; and I am happy to say we may expect him shortly in England, as he was to

leave the West Indies almost as soon as his letter. He has thrown up his staff appointment there, and returns, I hope, to enjoy health and happiness in his native land. We have another of our old friends come back amongst us — Lord De Beauvoir. He arrived from the Ionian islands I fancy about a week ago. I have seen him once since his return, and he was to leave town yesterday for Northumberland. I was sorry he could not stay a day or two longer, as I wished to take him down to Wimbledon. You know he has not seen Mrs. Cavendish for some years. He is a very fine, soldierlike-looking man. I believe he is about thirty, but he looks older, and is much tanned by the sun. He has seen a great deal of active service, and is at once the scholar, the officer, and the gentleman.

"I heard from a particular acquaintance of yours the other day: he says the air of Yorkshire has made the beautiful more beautiful. I quote his words with critical exactness. I imagine he thinks

a longer residence there would not hurt you in the least. He says something about coming up to town, but he is careful not to specify the time; for which I commend him, and so I hope does my Amelia. Your cousin Henrietta is growing a very pretty girl: she is the gentlest creature in the world, and yet I am afraid Harry and she do not get on as well as I could wish. I can give your good aunt little news of her truant lord, except that he is well.

"I was very melancholy before I sat down to write to you, and I had enough to make me so. I had been having a copy taken of your poor mamma's miniature, that I might give it to you. Believe me, my best love, that next to the obligations of religion and morality, is that which you are under to venerate the memory of your angel mother; and may the remembrance of her maternal fondness and of her unwearied virtue chasten the carelessness of youth, and console you under sorrow, if such should be your lot:

for when the heart is oppressed with affliction, and looks forward to a better world than this, it is soothing to reflect that there is one who has gone before us, and who will meet us, we may hope, on our arrival there. O my Amelia! live so that you may be enabled placidly to contemplate that future life; and rest assured, that by so doing you will have a greater enjoyment of this. God for ever bless you! prays,

"Your affectionate Father,

"GEORGE CAVENDISH."

Amelia's voice faltered as she read the conclusion of the letter, and turning towards Lady Allondale, she said, "I cannot look at the Spanish verse just now, or tell you what I was thinking about it. It is so kind of papa to get that picture done for me! I remember, just before I left town I happened to go into his room when he was dressing, and he was hanging it about his neck; for he always wears it; and I told him in a very low

voice how much I should like to have one to wear too; and you see how he has recollected it all."

"Yes," replied Lady Allondale, "and you ought indeed to value it. You are fortunate, Amelia, in having so good a father. He has not suffered his own grief to absorb him so as to render him forgetful either of his public or private duties; and we all know how he felt Lady Caroline's death."

"O that shocking day!" exclaimed Amelia, "when poor mamma died: you know I was just seven years old. And I had been so happy a few days before, on learning that I had another little brother. Mamma had been going on well; I had seen her myself, with dear little George lying by her side on the bed, and she had kissed me so fondly, and spoken to me so cheerfully!—I cannot think now what could occasion so terrible a change; but the fever got worse and worse. They would not at last take me into her room to bid her good night, and I recollect

sobbing myself to sleep. I awoke early in the morning, and when I opened the curtain, I did not see the nurse in the room. I called, but I was afraid to call too loud, for fear of waking mamma. At length, when I was quite tired of waiting, I got up and opened the door. Just at the door I met the nurse, and she looked, O so pale! She dragged me back into the room, and shut the door. She sat down upon my little bed, and burst into tears, and I remember so well trying to take her hands from her face, and asking what was the matter."

Amelia paused, and Lady Allondale, in a low voice, said, "These are sad things to think of; but the circumstances were just those to make impression on a child's mind."

"Ah!" said Amelia, "but that was not the worst. — Two or three days afterwards we saw papa. He was sitting in mamma's dressing-room; and it was so dark, we could scarcely see him when we came in. He was sitting on a couch

where a shawl of mamma's was lying, and he had his hand upon it. Harry stood at the door—but I ran up to him, and he took me in his arms, and burst into tears. I had never seen him shed tears before; and it is so shocking to see a man's tears. He never spoke to us all the while we were in the room. He tried to speak, but he could not; and at last he kissed us, and pushed us away from him, and the nurse took us away, and we went and sat together in the nursery window, sobbing as if our hearts would break. It was a long time before papa could bear to see George—I think he saw him first by accident, about a month after mamma's death, when he came suddenly into the nursery on hearing that I was not well. He started when he saw him on the nurse's lap, and stopped; then went up to her, took the child from her, and kissed it with tears in his eyes. Poor George! how papa loves him now!

There was rather a long pause. At last Lady Allondale said, "Amelia, it ap-

pears wrong to utter such a sentiment; but do you know, I almost wish I had died like your mamma."

"Oh, don't say so," said Amelia hastily. "Would you have liked to make my uncle as unhappy as papa?"

"Do you think he would have been as unhappy, Amelia?" asked Lady Allondale sorrowfully.

Amelia could not answer; for the manner in which the question was put convinced her what the answer ought to be.

"Amelia," said Lady Allondale, "you are going to leave me in October; and sometimes I feel as if then I should see you for the last time. Do you know what I am going to wish you? My wish will tell you what has been the cause of all my tears! It is, my dear Amelia, that when you are married, you may never feel the misery of living year after year without seeing a child to bless you."

She burst into tears, and hid her face on Amelia's neck. "Yes, this has been,

indeed, the source of all my sorrow; not so much in itself, as from what it has given rise to. The disappointment has embittered my husband's temper, and made him, I believe, feel totally indifferent to the idea of losing me. Our marriage has been an unfortunate one; I am sure your father did not approve of it; and besides we had known one another so short a time. I thought before marriage that, whatever might be Lord 'Allondale's defects, his temper could never be ruffled; but I might have guessed that the gay and the happy cannot bear disappointment. My poor father, too! Often have I caught him looking at me with his eyes full of tears. He feels, he knows I am not happy. But it is a great comfort to me that I am so near him. Oh, how good Lord Allondale was to me at the time when he bought this place, that I might be near my father! It is now, to be sure, a very solitary abode; he is scarcely ever here; but still I love it better than Woodbourne

Park: for when I am there, I am obliged always to have parties staying in the house, and I have neither spirits nor health for that sort of thing. And as for London, that is still worse. Besides, I have Mrs. Mortimer close to me here, though she sometimes, with her simplicity, makes me very unhappy. She tells me of Lord Allondale's gaiety; that he is a favourite of the young and beautiful; that Sir Francis met him at the opera on such a night; at a masqued ball at another. Sir Francis, I believe, guesses sometimes what I feel; for I have seen him suddenly change the conversation, and try to amuse me with some little anecdote of persons more indifferent to me."

Amelia knew not exactly what remark to make; but at length, as if thinking aloud, she exclaimed: "I shall not like to see my uncle, after what you have told me: he will come up to me with one of his pleasant smiles, and I shall think of you far away in Yorkshire."

"Amelia, let him, I beseech you, see no alteration in your manner: he would guess to what it was owing. If you love me, act towards him as you have been accustomed to do. Remember he is your uncle; and besides I love him too well not to wish that others should love him also; so promise me, Amelia."

"My dear aunt," said Amelia, "the evening is clearing up; let us walk over to the Park; I want to read to Frank part of papa's letter; and there will be such a large party there to-morrow, I may not have the opportunity of doing it. By the by, I have not looked at the verses yet; however, I can open them as we walk along."

CHAP. II.

"She was beloved, she loved; she is and doth;
But still sweet Love is food for Fortune's tooth."

Troilus and Cressida.

Sir Francis Leslie, far superior to his father in personal appearance, to whom, however, he bore a strong resemblance, was his inferior in genius and ability. He was clever; but it was rather the cleverness which is gathered from the world, and which makes us acceptable to it, than that which is cultivated in retirement, and which reflects honour on that retirement in return. He had passed, young as he yet was, for he was only three-and-twenty, through the circles of the political and fashionable world; but the latter had left the greater influence on his mind and on his manners, and this influence was only counteracted by the habits of his earlier life, and his affection for

Amelia Cavendish. He was amiable, but there was no firmness with his virtue; he was honourable, but he had sometimes confused notions of what constituted honour. Ardent, entertaining, high-spirited, he was the idol of many women, and had he been ambitious, he might have aspired, and with great probability of success, to be "the admired of all beholders."

And it was to Sir Francis Leslie, that Amelia Cavendish — the beautiful, the intelligent Amelia Cavendish — had given her young and enthusiastic heart. From childhood they had known each other, Mrs. Mortimer having, in the spring of every year, contrary to her original intention, come up to London; and even in childhood, Amelia had never looked so sweetly, or moved so gracefully, as when she was in the presence of the young Sir Francis. Mr. Cavendish had encouraged this early intimacy, for he deemed that his daughter and the lively Baronet were suited to each other; and when Amelia, on the completion of her sixteenth year,

received from Lady Allondale a pressing invitation to pass the summer in Yorkshire, he readily gave her his permission to accept of it. He was not surprised when, by the letters he occasionally received from Lady Allondale, he found that Sir Francis had become the devoted admirer of his daughter. He was pleased at this, but still, with the natural caution of a parent who feels that in his decision rests the future happiness of a beloved and beautiful child—of a child cherished in infancy, and idolized in womanhood—he hesitated to grant his final sanction to that hope which, in its completion, would involve interests so dear. "Continue to love my Amelia," he wrote to Sir Francis: "continue to deserve her; you are both too young to marry yet. For yourself, you are just of age; you have therefore now for the first time at your disposal your father's fortune. Let me see, let me judge how you acquit yourself in this new situation, and there will be time enough to marry afterwards." Sir Francis

made one or two ineffectual efforts to change the resolution of Mr. Cavendish; and he then thought it better to endeavour to be contented with the present.

The succeeding spring had been passed by Sir Francis as usual in town; but he was anxious to please the father of Amelia: he met Amelia herself at the opera, at assemblies, at concerts; for Mr. Cavendish, proud of the beauty and the talents of his daughter, had introduced her, perhaps, too early to the world, and he passed the ordeal triumphantly. It was considered advisable that he should spend a few months on the continent. At the end of autumn he became weary of his banishment: he returned, and Amelia thought him as amiable as ever; but Mr. Cavendish saw that he was changed. Sir Francis again requested the hand of Amelia.

"Do you think," said Mr. Cavendish, with a smile, "that either she or you are wiser than you were last year?

Sir Francis coloured; and at length

smiled too. He saw it would be necessary to acquiesce; and it was as well to acquiesce with grace. But "hope deferred maketh the heart sick;" and the judgment is not so clear when the heart is disordered. He thought himself unkindly used by Mr. Cavendish, and he made his appeal to Amelia. Amelia, though devoted to him, would hear no complaints of her father; and he had to turn elsewhere for consolation. The season of gaiety began; and he endeavoured to drown thought in dissipation. There were not wanting those who took advantage of his youth and inexperience; and the circumstance of his occasionally frequenting the fashionable gaming-houses came to the ear of Mr. Cavendish. Anxious for his daughter, anxious for Sir Francis, even should they never be united, he called on him after he had received this intelligence. He pointed out to him the danger he was incurring, and the ruin he was probably preparing for himself. He told him that more than ever he rejoiced

that the irrevocable engagement had not been contracted; but he assured him, also, that though the expression of that satisfaction might act on him as a warning, he did not wish it to operate as a discouragement; that there was yet time to redeem the past; that if the future was estimable, the past might even be forgotten. Sir Francis, touched, soothed, convinced, held out his hand to Mr. Cavendish; and, to prove that he was sincere in his promises of reformation, he declared that he would leave London the instant his debts of honour were discharged. He kept his word; and Mr. Cavendish, when he saw him break thus suddenly from his dangerous connections, felt that there was yet much to hope. It was in the July of this year, that Lady Allondale again requested a visit from Amelia. Mr. Cavendish hesitated, for he felt that his daughter was already but too much attached to Sir Francis; but he knew that Lady Allondale was far from well, and that such a companion as

Amelia would be a solace and a charm to her lonely hours. He suffered her then to go, and consoled himself with the idea that her presence would be at once the example and the safeguard of Sir Francis. So indeed had it proved; and the beautiful days of summer were rendered more charming by the interchange of admiration, affection, and esteem.

It was with the gay feeling of a heart at ease, that Amelia, on the evening when she received her father's letter, proposed the visit to Sydney Park. "Now," cried she, as she sprung down the steps, "now for the paper of verses! Who will talk of a woman's curiosity after this? They have been to me like a sealed order; and, without any command to abstain from the perusal, the forbearance is wonderful." She then unfolded the paper.

"My love," said Lady Allondale, "will you give me a literal translation; for you know I am no Spanish scholar?"

"Ah! but that will spoil it, indeed it

will. How well it sounds in Spanish!" And half to herself she read as follows:—

"Se a quien los leones vence,
Vence una muger hermosa,
O el de flaco averguençe,
O ella de ser mas furiosa."

"'Tis about lions, and bravery, and weakness, and sweet smiles,—an epitome of beauty and the beast; for there is a majestic lion in the first line, and a handsome woman in the second. Can you guess whom it comes from?"

"Let me see the hand."

"Ah! but you do not know the handwriting; and as for that, it is partly disguised. This is not fair of papa: however, Mr. Hammond shall be gratified by a translation."

"Mr. Hammond!"

"He to talk of subjection!" cried Amelia. "He to speak of blushing! But, to say the truth, he may blush. Every man who acts foolishly ought to do so."

"Amelia, you are severe. However, one thing I must ask you. Surely your papa is not anxious for Mr. Hammond's success?"

"Assuredly not, my dear aunt: besides, I suspect he knows nothing about it. How could it possibly enter into his head, that Mr. Hammond, in his great wisdom, should fall in love with me?"

"How then did it enter into yours?"

"Oh, you know, one finds out those things. At all events, papa wishes me to be civil to him; and that is the reason he would not mention his name in the letter."

"How!" said Lady Allondale. "I don't understand you."

"Why because I am rather reserved to him in general. He is, in short, what the French call *une bête;* and I suppose that is the reason he has written about one."

The recollections of Amelia were, however, rapidly drawn from Mr. Hammond, when, on entering Sydney Park, they met

Mrs. Mortimer and Sir Francis Leslie, who, tempted by the agreeable change in the weather, had come out to survey some alterations which were being made in the lodge.

"Welcome, welcome once more to Sydney!" cried Sir Francis, springing forward. "The clouds have been in combination against our charming walks,—the envious clouds! But how are you, Amelia? Quite, quite well?" He took her hand; and shortly after, drawing her arm in his, he led her on in the direction of the house.

Mrs. Mortimer was at this time rather more than sixty years of age, but she was still possessed of a cheerfulness uncommon for her years; and this might be owing as much to the easy calmness of her mind, and her imperturbable good temper, as to her general good health. Without being tinctured with any of that unbecoming folly which sometimes makes the advanced in life either forget or endeavour to conceal their years, she yet

felt so anxious to make Sydney Park an agreeable residence for Sir Francis, that at her table were frequently assembled the noble, the rich, the entertaining of the neighbourhood, and she took pleasure in the festivity of those around her. It was seldom, indeed, the case that one or other of the gay companions of Sir Francis was not staying in the house. He had only once paid a visit to his estate in Scotland; and as he had taken a decided aversion to that country, it was as convenient to him as it was agreeable, to find that the house, the domestics, almost the fortune of Mrs. Mortimer, were at his disposal. But there was a generosity in the midst of his careless extravagance; and, equally unwilling to distress her by a recital of his occasional embarrassments, as to extricate himself from them by her kind interference, he had never, even when most distressed for money, imposed on her good nature, or profited by her liberality; and Mrs. Mortimer, therefore, considered him as the most prudent and

moderate young man whom she had ever known. She doted on him with a fondness which even exceeded that she had felt for his mother, though his mother had been an only and fondly-cherished child; and Sir Francis felt a pleasure and a pride in showing his respectful gratitude to a woman, who seemed scarcely to have any earthly wish but that of beholding him happy. At this period, two gentlemen were his guests at Sydney. He had left them engaged at billiards, not without the hope that he might chance to meet Amelia.

How short did their walk together now appear! They paused, at length, at one of the gates, and looked back. Mrs. Mortimer and Lady Allondale were still in the distance.

"We had better wait for them," said Amelia: "indeed, I did not know we had walked so fast."

"If you must wait," said Sir Francis, "let us sit down here;" and he led her to a bench under a large chesnut-tree.

"And now let me read those verses again."

Amelia handed them to him.

"Lend me your pencil, Frank, and give me the back of a letter. I have been thinking of these lines, and wish to show you my translation."

After a little hesitation, she traced the following verse, and read it aloud to Sir Francis.

"If he who can on lions rush
Is vanquish'd by a woman's feature,
Or he must at his weakness blush,
Or she at her more savage nature."

"Now," said Amelia, "this is the real translation; but I should like to play some trick to Mr. Hammond; so help me, pray do. It must be something with the same words — something with a little hint wrapped up in it — something——"

"But if he understands Spanish," said Sir Francis, "as I suspect he does, it will be an affront never to be forgiven."

"And if he does understand it, and

has given me the trouble to translate it, it is but fair he should pay a tax for his whim. Come, you must oblige me." — "Well," replied Sir Francis laughing, "men may have good arguments sometimes; but it matters not if they have not the heart to use them. Remember, I shelter myself under your authority: I bow to your orders."

Amelia smiled; and after a short consultation, she dictating, and Sir Francis occasionally suggesting an alteration, and contributing to the arrangement of a line, the following stanzas were run off at the bottom of the translation: —

"The lion's gen'rous heart disdains
To leave his wood-encrowned lair
For fertile fields and fragrant plains:
He knows his dwelling is not there.
But man, with soul ignobler far,
Adoring woman's fading bloom,
Though bidden back, steals on to mar
The dulcet breath of love's perfume.
Oh! let him blush, himself to find
So weak, so false, and so unkind!"

The verses were written and read. "They sound well," said Sir Francis; "but do you think Mr. Hammond will understand them? And what are we to do about your father?"

"Oh! that will be easily managed. I shall direct them in an envelope to Mr. Hammond, to show that I have discovered him, and to render the application more evident; and I will seal, yes, I will seal it, with the seal you gave me last winter, Frank; but here come my aunt and Mrs. Mortimer." They rose, and the whole party were soon at the front of the house. The gentlemen in the billiard-room, not aware of the arrival of the strangers, were still engaged at their game, when Amelia, supporting Mrs Mortimer, approached the door, which was half open to the hall.

"Oh, it is too dark to play any longer," said one of them, throwing down the cue with which he had been playing, and walking away from the table.

"Captain Montague has lost," whispered Amelia, and they stood silently in the doorway.

"Too dark! There is light enough for a good game yet, for those who win," said the other, and he continued to amuse himself at the table. "There, I'll bet you what you please that I make a cannon there, and put your ball into the right hand pocket."

"You may do what you like with my ball," said Captain Montague carelessly; "I am not playing now. Where in the world can Leslie have gone to? But I could give a shrewd guess."

At this instant Amelia thought it better to lead Mrs. Mortimer forward; and Captain Montague eagerly advanced to meet them. "Miss Cavendish! this is an agreeable surprise indeed! Did you walk? Is it possible you can have walked, after the torrents of rain that have been pouring to-day?"

"O!" said Amelia smiling, "we must not think of these things in the country,

if we wish to enjoy it properly. And, really, there is a delightful air this evening: who would not enjoy it? We come into the country, you know, to live rationally."

"And to do nothing else?" said Captain Montague gaily.

"O yes! to talk, play chess, and billiards, *sometimes*."

"Allow me the honour of a game with you now," said Captain Montague.

"Are you sure it is not too dark?" answered Amelia with mock gravity. "But, dark or not, I cannot play now. Indeed, my dear Mrs. Mortimer, I am afraid you must be tired — let us go on to the library."

"Yes," said Mrs. Mortimer, "I am tired a little, but I wanted sadly to see the lodge; besides, I thought the walk would do me good. How do you think Frank looks, my love? I thought yesterday he was not looking well; but you must *know* best."

"I!" said Amelia, colouring.

"Yes, you know, because you do not see him every day, as I do — not quite every day. Well, he is the best young man in the world. I hope other people think so too: don't you, Amelia?"

"Shall we move on, madam?" asked Amelia. "My aunt and Sir Francis must have gone to the library by the terrace. They will be wondering what has become of us."

"Pray let me be your avant courier;" and Captain Montague sprang forward.

They passed on, and Mrs. Mortimer was not sorry to find herself seated once more in her easy chair; and Sir Francis, happy and in more than his usual spirits, contributed greatly to the amusement of the company.

"But where is Bennet?" said he at length. "How can he absent himself at such a time?"

"I fancy he is at the billiard-table yet," said Montague. "It affords a most delightful level for him."

"Things move easily on their own level," said Amelia. "I should not accuse Captain Bennet of ambition — the glorious fault of angels and of gods."

"Why?" said Captain Montague.

Amelia hesitated, and then said in a half whisper to Sir Francis, "Because he is not angelic, and because I should suspect his faults to be any thing but glorious."

"I will betray you Miss Cavendish," said Captain Montague. "Here comes Bennet; now let us attack him. Why, Bennet, we thought you were lost. Miss Cavendish was in a state of excessive alarm, and we have been considering where was the most likely place to find you,"

"Ay," yawned Bennet, "I knew my character was in good hands, and I thought it would fare worse if I came to take care of it. But the fact of the matter is, Miss Cavendish, I never play except when I am in the country: you

know, we must find something to cheat the hours there. Here are no theatres, no amusements."

"We thank you for the compliment, Captain Bennet," said Amelia, smiling; and turning again to Sir Francis, she said in a low tone, Captain Bennet having sauntered to a window, whither he was followed by Captain Montague, "If there is any thing I detest, it is a gambler: of other vices there may be hope; but of this none, none!"

Sir Francis half-started; but it was getting dark, and his emotion was not observed by Amelia. "And yet," said he, "Bennet is a good-natured fellow: he can tell a good story, and put a little life into the company when they are about to fall asleep."

"You like him, then?" said Amelia.

"Who? I?—I am sure I scarcely know whether I like him or not. He is well enough as the world goes; he has been abroad, and he makes the most of it."

"O not the most of it, Frank. Do you think his manner gentlemanly, his conversation elegant, his wit refined?"

"Amelia, how have I leisure now to tell what is amiable except yourself? — I spoke hastily. I am sure I care nothing about Captain Bennet; but I could not ask Montague down by himself. —— Well, they go next week, and what is worse, I am afraid I must soon go too."

"Indeed!" said Amelia, and her voice trembled; "I did not think you were going so soon."

"I am obliged to go," said Sir Francis in a slower tone. "Heaven knows, I would willingly keep away from London; I had enough of it last spring. But I must go, on account of the money I have in the Spanish funds. I ordered it to be transferred long since; and some of it is indeed in the French funds at this moment. But there has been something in the business I don't exactly understand; in short, I suspect my agent has been playing a double part in this

affair, and your father tells me I had better come to town and see about it myself. He says all the letters in the world are not worth two or three confidential conversations; and I believe he is right. My heart can bear witness to this in one case at least, Amelia. What even are your letters, compared to the pleasure of seeing you?"

"Yes," said Amelia, "a letter is but a silent messenger, after all. How soon it tells its tale! and then it can answer no questions — it can never vary its phraseology; and some variations are so graceful!"

The two gentlemen now rejoined them; tea was brought in, and after a little discussion as to what should be the amusement of the evening, the whole party sat down to Loo.

It was past eleven ere the guests were suffered to depart; and even after Mrs. Mortimer's carriage had drawn up to the door, there was so much to be said by Sir Francis to Amelia, that Lady Al-

londale had once or twice to stop as she passed through the hall.

"You are determined then on sending those lines to Mr. Hammond?—It is a hazardous step. If your father should discover what you have done?"

"O I mean to tell him all about it when I get home again; but after we have been at so much trouble about it, it will never do not to send it."

"I am thinking," said Sir Francis, "of the description of Milton's Eve. May I not make the application?

——— 'So absolute she seems,
That whatsoe'er she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best'"

"As for the wisdom," said Amelia, "O if there is wit in it, there is little wisdom. For the virtue—but we must not profane the term. For the discretion—but who can be discreet when they are angry? I only confess to the last term, because it certainly appears to me I could not just now do a better thing."

Sir Francis pressed her hand affectionately; Captain Montague came up on the other side, and thus escorted she reached the carriage.

"Are we to be punctual to-morrow, or are you to be fashionably late?"

"Late in every thing but our courtesy to you. We shall expect you, I need not say how soon."

Sir Francis at length suffered the door of the carriage to be closed, and it drove away.

It was near six o'clock on the following evening when Lady Allondale and Amelia arrived at Sydney. Sir Francis was faithful to his promise. He was but too happy to receive them. Leaving Lady Allondale — for love is a sad contemner of ceremony — to the care of Captain Bennet, he hastily led Amelia across the drawing-room. Mrs. Mortimer greeted her with her usual kindness; and Sir Francis, having placed her on the sofa, took the next vacant seat himself. The happy minutes, however, flew too

rapidly, and Sir Francis was compelled to separate himself from Amelia. The neighbourhood of Sydney Park boasted many opulent families, and two or three of honourable birth: still it is difficult to find in the country an equivalent for that polished wit, that amusing nonchalance, that medley of the noble, the literary, the elegant, which the attraction, the business, the dissipation of the capital draw within its focus. Amelia had been used to town society at its highest point of elevation: for there is an elevation, which borrowing from rank only sufficient to refine, retains itself on its exalted level by an elegant familiarity with what is excellent and with what is attractive. Women feel a pride in shedding an influence on conversation; and this sort of pride had been encouraged in Amelia. Admired at her father's table, she went into the country, and was idolized by Mrs. Mortimer. Mrs. Mortimer looked on her as the destined wife of Sir Francis; and at these large parties she seemed

willing to devolve on her the task of entertaining the guests at Sydney; and when the dinners at Mrs. Mortimer's were described as the most entertaining in that part of the country, it was admitted they were rendered so by the presence of Amelia Cavendish. Sir Francis, accustomed to the ease and witty carelessness of fashionable life, felt pleased, that while Amelia could evince both the one and the other, there were yet times when an innate dignity, and a behaviour more courtly still, told him that she only lent herself to the gaiety of the moment, and that she was fitted for higher things than these.

Captain Montague on the present occasion felt himself but too happy in being placed next Amelia at the dinner-table; nor was the latter averse to see him there, for he possessed not only the manners but the accomplishments of a perfect gentleman. He was a younger son, and he had not much beside his pay, though the world talked of his great expectations from an

uncle. His acquirements in literature were far from contemptible; but in the hurry of military business, and the idleness of fashionable life, he had learnt to disregard them. He was good-tempered and friendly, with a mixture, perhaps not a slight one, of vanity; and although too frequently led by the wish of the moment, and the solicitation and example of men whom he could not esteem, he yet deserved and obtained the friendship of loftier minds. His society was generally sought, and had he been rich, many a mother would have courted him for her daughter.

The person at table that the arrangement in question most displeased, was Sir Francis Leslie. He knew that Captain Montague admired Amelia, and he knew, too, that he was a pleasant man, and continually, although surrounded by the affluent and the fair, did his eye steal to that part of the table where Captain Montague and Amelia sat. At length —and how did he rejoice—the ladies rose

to retire, and he was himself again. Ah! had he deserved Amelia more, he would not thus have felt afraid of losing his influence over her heart.

Mrs. Mortimer was soon quietly established in her usual seat in the drawing-room, and Amelia exerted herself for the entertainment of those around her. Every one was agreeable at first, and willing to be pleased; but as the time drew on, and the gentlemen did not make their appearance, a sort of listlessness seemed to steal on the animation of the company, and the pauses in the conversation became more frequent and more long. The half hour before dinner is proverbially noticed for its tediousness; but perhaps the period here alluded to may merit also, in some degree, the application of a similar term. The first portion of it indeed is pleasant; there is a change of situation, and change of situation is relief; there is opportunity for confidential communication, for easy playfulness, for careless remark; but

expectation of the future in this, as in more important cases, at length makes the present wearisome; the spirits have exhausted themselves, and something extraneous is required to elevate them. The influence of this feeling was particularly felt just now by a very pretty and very fashionable young woman, who, half reclining half seated on an ottoman, read at times, or seemed to read the riddles on a skreen she was holding in her hand. "My love," said she to Amelia Cavendish, "the gentlemen are very ill-behaved this evening. I should tell Mrs. Mortimer so, but she, good soul, is half asleep; and if she were awake, she would be too good-natured to scold them."

"So I suppose, Lady Clanallan, you do not give me the credit of being equally good-natured?"

"O no, to be sure, because you are an interested person, my dear. I assure you Sir Francis is acquiring very bad habits. You ought to break him of them."

"There is a counteracting influence

to mine, I am afraid," said Amelia. "Apropos, is it not too bad that men are in horror at the thought of being governed by women, when they submit so quietly sometimes to be governed by each other?"

"Indeed, I agree with you. but to come back to the original proposition. I know whom you were thinking of when you talked of a counteracting influence; of poor Captain Bennet. I see you do not like him. Upon my honour, now, I think him a most agreeable man."

"Captain Bennet ought to be boundless in the expression of his gratitude," replied Amelia.

"But is he not entertaining, now? He makes one laugh, though one had arranged in the morning that it would be necessary to weep before the evening. Well! when you are married, you can make it a point, if you see good to change your opinion, to have Captain Bennet always in the house, and you will never want for amusement."

"Indeed," said Amelia, "as you like him so well, I will not pretend to interfere with you. He can talk undoubtedly; but then I would rather he should be silent — he can tell good stories, but who will warrant their truth? He is what the gentlemen may call a good fellow, but what I as a lady, and you know we are privileged, would call a bad one."

At this moment the gentlemen entered the drawing-room. Sir Francis took his station by Amelia, and Captain Montague hovered at a distance. Captain Bennet walked up to Lady Clanallan — "Upon my honour," said she, "you are intolerable, a pretty compliment you pay us! Come, let me know the heads of your conversation: we ought to confess our sins."

"Certainly, madam," said Captain Bennet, in a tone of half submission, "but only to our confessors. There are secrets that cannot be told in the drawing-room."

"Ah! I see 'conscience makes cowards of us all,' even of the bravest. Captain Bennet, as you are doubtless well acquainted with her, tell me, would you not rather confess to me than to her?"

"Assuredly; because in the one case I must speak truth, and in the other I might say as I pleased."

"O, for shame!" cried Lady Clanallan, "prepare yourself for a lecture. Indeed I should not be doing right were I to suffer you to escape unharmed after an avowal of such insincerity."

Captain Bennet with a smile sat down beside her ladyship.

The aristocracy of beauty is as proud as that of rank. Lady Clanallan was highly born, and her marriage had accorded with her birth; but she voluntarily renounced the selfish haughtiness which sometimes waits on an exalted station, to assume an elevation more dangerous—a sovereignty more alluring. It was a fashion with her to jest at rank;

and though there were moments when a look, a gesture, a word, reminded those around her that she had not forgotten who she was, she the more frequently moved in the sphere of her own attractions: happy — too happy — if she saw the world bow down and adore. Her element was admiration; and she felt deprived of her elasticity of mind, when transported to a different one. Lord Clanallan, a man somewhat in the vale of years, was more than proportionably grave: yet with this gravity, there was blended much complacency of temper; and Lady Clanallan, although she had married him without love, felt so grateful to him for the calm sunshine he cast around her, that even when dazzled by falser lights, she looked back with a confiding smile on the home of her security.

She had conquered Captain Bennet by her animation and her grace. The conquest would not have appeared worth much to one accustomed to estimate such things, either by the intrinsic value

of the object, or the accompaniments that surrounded it; but Lady Clanallan contented herself with an enumeration more simple; and besides it must be remembered that — she was in the country.

Captain Bennet was a man of the world, and there were those who would have called him a gentleman. Amelia Cavendish thought differently; and even though, in this instance, she was under the influence of some degree of prejudice, her opinion was correct. His manner certainly did not act as a good introduction to his conversation; but many, who were entertained by his conversation, forgot the defects of his manner. He had a ready wit that took with the world, and when he had no wit, he spoke as if he had it. He was skilful at play, and frequently as fortunate as he was skilful. It was his pleasure, almost his pride, to seem worse than he really was; and part of this was probably owing to his having past the hey-day of youth; for when we feel we begin to decline, we are tempted

to assume a lightness of demeanor that may operate a little on the half-formed opinions of others. Captain Bennet did not like Amelia Cavendish, and Amelia dreaded Captain Bennet. Sir Francis fancied that he did not like him either; but he used jokingly to say to Amelia, that he could "better spare a better man."

The amusements that the drawing-room presented, were soon put in requisition; and that easy arrangement presided over all which gives to higher life a charm, engaging from its very carelessness. Lady Clanallan walked up to the bagatelle board, followed by Captain Bennet. Her lord was seated in an adjoining room at a whist table. After Lady Clanallan had stood for a moment or two at the bagatelle table, she turned suddenly round — "Upon my honour, Captain Bennet, I beg your pardon; I did not see you. I thought, of course, you had gone off to the whist table."

"And why, may I ask your ladyship?"

"O! you know there is just the attraction there that always has an effect on you."

"That depends, madam, as to whether there is, or is not, any thing to attract me another way. I may be compelled, perhaps, to obey a summons by and bye; but for the present, I am infinitely better employed. 'Do you know I had a most extraordinary dream last night?"

"Indeed!—Why I thought you dreamt of nothing but having your hand full of honours, and a group of uncounted tricks upon the table."

"And," said Amelia, who had just joined them, "I suppose Captain Bennet was startled from his dream by the ghost of the ace of spades telling him he should win no more."

"I don't know what the ghost of the ace of spades might say to me, Miss Cavendish, but the ace of spades himself tells me a different story; and then as to what Lady Clanallan says, I have no honours to boast of even in my dreams; and

for tricks they are not to be boasted of either sleeping or waking. But the fact was, I dreamt I was at a masquerade, and disguised as a monk of La Trappe."

"Capital!" cried Lady Clanallan laughing. "And I hope every one talked most perseveringly on purpose to torment you."

"How well you must have sustained the character—" said Amelia, "and how difficult it is to do this!"

"Do you mean at a masquerade, or in real life, Miss Cavendish," said Captain Montague, who had silently placed himself beside her.

"O as for that I scarcely know. The first thing in either case is to get one."

"Alas! can no one sell me a character!" cried Captain Bennet. "I shall soon get used to it, I have no doubt. Montague, tell me where to apply for this necessary article?"

"Not to me, my good fellow," said Montague laughing; "I have enough to do to take care of my own. But Miss

Cavendish, we are all standing idle here. There is Lady Clanallan, I am sure she will play; she has been twisting the mace in her hand this half hour. Allow me to be your *chevalier preux et sans reproche;* the influence of your presence will inspire me with all the necessary qualifications; and Bennet, I can answer for him, will be proud to be the gentleman in waiting on the other side."

The party was soon formed. Lady Clanallan had just begun to play, when Sir Francis, who, for the last few minutes, had been wandering about the room, rather hastily came up to them.

"Why, I thought, Montague, the other day you were abusing the bagatelle board as childish and foolish; yet I see you condescend to play at it sometimes."

"And who would not play at any thing in such good company? Ask Bennet whether he is not of the same opinion."

"To be sure:" said Bennet, "I should feel too happy in being allowed to be

miserable, when I had such companions in my affliction."

"Hear him, Sir Francis!" cried Lady Clanallan; "he talks of misery at a bagatelle board!"

"Why, is not life itself a trifle, my dear Lady Clanallan? A pretty one, and a pleasaut one, sometimes, I confess; but still a trifle."

The expression of Amelia's countenance as she looked up, could not be mistaken.

"You provoking creature," exclaimed her ladyship, "you have spoiled my game this time at least; there is only one ball in."

"And as for me, Lady Clanallan, I am put out, so let that satisfy your vengeance; but you know that ladies—and, indeed, gentlemen too—should never play a game that they are not attending to."

"Worse and worse; I vote that he be banished from our society to the whist table. I will look out for some more

submissive champion. This man will not condescend to walk in leading strings."

"Shall I tell your ladyship a secret?" said Bennet laughing: "If you put a child in leading strings, he generally walks the worse for it afterwards. For me, I have made so many false steps in my day, that, upon my soul, I can't find my way back again."

"Amelia," said Sir Francis, as the concluding strokes of the game were being dealt by Captain Montague, "we were going to petition you for a tune upon the harp; the music waits for your patronage. There is young Carlton lounging there on the Ottoman, doing nothing; he will supply your place here—elsewhere we cannot supply it."

"But surely," said Captain Montague, "Miss Cavendish will not desert us thus suddenly: we must give Lady Clanallan and Captain Bennet their revenge. I protest against such a change of measures. Miss Cavendish, we appeal to you

against this arbitrary act—an invasion of our liberties!"

"Ha! ha! Montague," cried Bennet, "help yourself out of the dilemma with parliamentary language, if you can, and see, if, like that which is used in a graver place, it had not better have been left alone, for all the good it does!"

Amelia was still hesitating; but when Captain Montague answered with a sort of gay sentimentality, "In former days there was the parliament of love. I would that it existed now: what would I not give to be the orator of such a parliament!" Amelia put down the mace upon the board, and giving her hand to Sir Francis, she was led by him to the other end of the room. Captain Montague followed them with his eyes; they did not join the group that was loitering about the harp and the piano; but on the contrary, seated themselves at some distance from it. The conversation, he could see, was an interesting one; there was at

first a slight shade on the brow of Sir Francis, but it rapidly passed away. In less than five minutes Amelia rose, and moved towards the harp, followed by Sir Francis. Captain Montague, at the close of the second game of bagatelle, led Lady Clanallan to a seat near it. Captain Bennet went to bet on the success of the most experienced players at the card table; and young Carlton resumed his lounge on the Ottoman.

The party, one of the pleasantest that had enlivened Sydney that summer, did not break up till late. As Amelia folded her shawl gracefully around her, when about to depart, Sir Francis whispered to Mrs. Mortimer, who was looking at her with a benevolent smile, "Does she not look more beautiful every time you see her?" "Beautiful!" repeated Captain Montague in a low voice, "an angel!"

Sir Francis turned round with compressed lip; but instantly recovering him-

self, he said to Mr. Dormer, "My dear sir, take charge of Lady Allondale; I am going to lead Miss Cavendish to the carriage."

Captain Montague made his parting bow in silence. Mrs. Mortimer affectionately gave her farewell; and Lady Allondale and Amelia were soon away from Sydney.

CHAP. III.

"You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings,
And soar with them above a common bound."
Romeo and Juliet

"This jealousy is for a precious creature."
Winter's Tale.

"No, no, Bennet," cried Captain Montague the next morning, as he rose suddenly from the couch on which he had been lounging, "I am not in love: it is not quite as bad as that yet, besides, who loves without hope? and in this case there would be none. Sir Francis stands to bar the entrance against other suitors: he has a right to do so; and, were he out of the question, I cannot marry till I am rich; and when I am rich, I shall think about it twice."

"Then, upon my soul, you will think of it once too often: however, I wish you all good fortune, notwithstanding the

danger it will bring with it. Well, as you are not in love, Montague, there is no treason in asking your opinion of Miss Cavendish."

"Where there is no loyalty to forfeit on the one side," replied Captain Montague, "there certainly can be no treason in endeavouring to corrupt on the other; but it is always better to refuse a bribe. Were I to talk, I should think."

"And were you to think, you would love; that is the conclusion, I presume. Well then, hear my opinion. Miss Cavendish is as clever as her father, as far as the ability of a woman who does not know the world can be said to equal the ability of a man who does. She has—— what shall I call it? help me to a word,—the intuition of her sex,—aye, that will do; but then, fortunately for us poor men, she has its weakness also. She loves Leslie, because she has been accustomed to see him, and because it was necessary for her to love some one; and because he flattered her, and looked up

to her. She will find out the folly of her choice when she is married; and then Heaven help her, for I am sure I cannot."

"Come, come, Bennet, she would call you to account for your irreverence."

"She would call me to account first for my offences against herself, or there is no vanity in woman."

"Vanity enough," echoed Montague, laughing; "but there is something better than vanity about them after all."

"'Vanity of vanities,'" returned Bennet, "'all is vanity.'"

"The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose. Who knows but what he did so when he warred with the archangel? That, perhaps, may serve you as a precedent for thus speaking, when a mortal angel is concerned:" and, whistling a tune, Captain Montague walked away to the farther end of the room.

"Fine enough, in all conscience," hallooed Bennet, "but a most palpable anachronism. When did the devil fight with the archangel, Montague? And

when was the Bible written? Always compare dates, my good fellow, a rule without an exception; for instance, when your mistress talks of the opera of such a year, &c. &c. &c., take notes in silence; and, by following up the clue she gives you, ten to one but you guess her age precisely. I always used to do that when I was in love: they could never cheat me."

"Did you never cheat them, Bennet? There should be ingenuousness on both sides——"

"Who, I? I had no occasion for it. They always took me to be younger than I really was, whether I would or not; and heaven knows I had no milk of roses and its concomitants to help me out. Some people, to be sure, look young all their lives; and I suppose that is my case."

"'Severe in youthful beauty!'" murmured Montague.

"Ah! you are the man for quotations. Teach me to write verses, for pity's sake

teach me to write verses; and then, when my prose is not the most unexceptionable in the world, I may take refuge in my poetry. Show me some love-verses, Montague. I know you have some in your dressing-case, next the Esprit de Marechal, for when you handed the bottle to Miss Cavendish yesterday evening, Lady Clanallan told me she supposed you were going to let out the lover's sighs that were imprisoned in it."

"Lady Clanallan is very witty," said Captain Montague gravely. "I fancy she knows little about lover's sighs, or love either; but some people have the agreeable talent of talking fluently of what they do not understand."

"That is just the reason I was able to describe Miss Cavendish so well, Montague. But now, to leave 'this keen encounter of our wits,' what say you to a gallop over the Downs, to shake off the effects of yesterday's dinner? Leslie is busy with some papers: I know he will be engaged the whole morning; and we

can go afterwards to Clanallan Park, where it is fit I should pay my devoirs; and then, as you are not in love, we can venture to ride to Allondale House; and, if you do not fall in love while we are there, we may venture to come home again."

"Agreed!" cried Montague, "one must do something. A ride always puts me in spirits."

"I am sorry to hear you are out of spirits: that is the consequence of not being in love. If you were in love now, you would have so much to think of, you would not have time to be out of spirits; you would be conning over the fair enslaver's last words; you would be living on her last looks; you would be preparing your next soft speech, and fancying her reply; in short, you would be doing all that fools do. Do you know, I think there must be an especial paradise made for fools. At all events, fools, in ancient days, were reckoned the merriest fellows in the world."

"And they sometimes told unpleasant truths too. Take care, take care."

"Convicted! convicted!" cried Bennet, bursting into a loud and unrestrained fit of laughter. "Mrs. Mortimer! Sir Francis! Miss Cavendish! O that I could summon you all! Convicted before he comes into court! Guilty by his own confession! Convicted! convicted!"

Captain Montague coloured, and said angrily: "I fancy, Bennet, Mrs. Mortimer will not be the better for that hoarse laugh of yours; the sooner we prepare for our ride the better. You must have alarmed the whole house."

Bennet, still laughing, followed him to the hall, and when he saw him pass through the door that led to the grounds, he repeated in the true tone of the comipathetic:—

"A fool!—a fool! I met a fool i' the forest—
A motley fool—"

To Clanallan Park the gentlemen bent their way. Lively as ever, their fashion-

able hostess talked, laughed, and looked prettily. As for Captain Bennet, though far from being a ready pupil in the school of courtesy, he had that assurance about him which enables some men to feel at home every where. The atmosphere of the mess-room was indeed more congenial to him; but he contrived, by his own manner, to carry a certain portion of it with him wherever he went. He might not lean very gracefully over a couch on which some fair lady was sitting; but he could talk to her with more real self-possession than many of those elegant triflers who, while they appear to be attending to the lady, are in reality attending to themselves. Captain Bennet was accustomed to say of himself, that he had never blushed since he was a boy of eight years old; and however some of his other assertions might be doubted, no one ever thought it necessary to dispute the truth of this.

"Apropos, Captain Montague," cried Lady Clanallan, "how very well Miss Cavendish looked last night."

"Your ladyship must pardon me," exclaimed Bennet hastily, "for saying that your remark is not at all àpropos: here have I been preaching philosophy to Captain Montague during our long ride to Clanallan Park, and your unlucky remark dissipates all my sage reasoning in a moment."

"I am afraid," said Captain Montague, "that reasoning cannot be very sage that is overthrown by a breath. What does Lady Clanallan think on the subject?"

"Oh! if you talk of reasoning I am lost. An argument always gives me the headache. Now a headache is my aversion, therefore an argument is so too."

"Why, Lady Clanallan," said Captain Bennet, "this is the very perfection of logic itself—argument by implication. Pray did your most potent, grave, and reverend signior instruct you in this art; for, to tell the truth, he always brings the majesty of the senate with him. I see a meditated speech in the very folds of his cravat. And when he enters the draw-

ing-room, I think I hear the cry of 'Order, order.' "

"Oh! that he would enter it now!" said Captain Montague. "But after all, Bennet, you are an excellent fellow; it is impossible to do without you. Is it not, Lady Clanallan?"

"O, absolutely impossible. Miss Cavendish was saying so yesterday evening. Now, if you would not be vain, Captain Bennet, I would let you into a secret: I really believe Miss Cavendish has lost her heart to you."

"A dead loss, most assuredly, madam, if it has gone in that direction. I always restore stray goods to their owners."

"Come, come, no joking, Captain Bennet; I will give you all the signs by which I discovered this. In the first place she always avoids you when it is possible to do so; and what woman of delicacy would not when she thinks her affection is unreturned? In the second place, when she is obliged to speak to you, she says as little as possible, and

with a reserved air; and you know lovers' quarrels are the most common things in nature; in the last place — Captain Montague, what shall I say in the last place?"

"O! I think your ladyship should put Captain Bennet himself in the last place; for I fancy it is there Miss Cavendish has placed him. Alas! poor man, he knows his misfortune, but he bears it most resignedly."

The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of visitors. Captain Bennet appeared not inclined to stir, and Montague at length determined to prosecute the remainder of his ride alone; and it is scarcely necessary to add, that he was quite as well pleased that it should be so. He soon reached Allondale House. He was received by Amelia. — "Lady Allondale," said she, "has gone on a charitable errand to the village. I ought to have gone too; but I don't know, I have not been in good spirits this

morning, so I have been nursing them with a volume of Lord Byron."

"I have never seen Miss Cavendish out of spirits yet," said Captain Montague, "you must not make me become an admirer of melancholy."

"I would recommend no one to fall in love with melancholy," said Amelia; "for it is an unpleasant companion after all; and, I am sure, no one ought to be melancholy after the gay party of last night. How is Mrs. Mortimer to-day?"

"As lively and good-humoured as ever. She protests that Sir Francis shall not run away from her yet. For my part, I am surprised how he can think of doing so, when there is so much of attraction in the neighbourhood of Sydney. But, Miss Cavendish, when are you to appear in the gay world again? Do you intend no visit to Cheltenham, or to Brighton? Sir Francis has promised to introduce me to Mr. Cavendish. Will you permit me then, when the festivities

of the spring commence, to pay you my compliments at the opera, or to dance with you in a quadrille?"

"It is dangerous to make promises so long before-hand," said Amelia, with a smile; "they are occasionally forgotten."

"There are some things, like some faces, however," replied Captain Montague quickly, "that men never forget. I shall find, in future, that such a memory is mine."

Amelia felt herself rather embarrassed. After a short pause she turned the conversation on other subjects; yet a sort of restraint continued to hang over her. She wished for the return of Lady Allondale, or else that Captain Montague would rise to go: he seemed determined, however, not to move; and when at length Lady Allondale entered the room, it was impossible to go just then.

"My dear Amelia," said Lady Allondale, after Captain Montague had been expressing his admiration of a pretty little ivory cabinet which stood on a marble

slab near the window, "has Captain Montague ever seen the beautiful set of chess-men your papa gave you on your last birth-day?"

"I believe not," said Amelia; and she rose and brought them for his inspection. Captain Montague looked at them, praised them over and over again, and hesitated: at length he said, "Is it too great a favour to request that Miss Cavendish will accept me as her opponent at chess? I watched your game once when you were playing with Sir Francis, and I should like to be conquered by you."

Amelia in her turn hesitated. "My love," said Lady Allondale, "you know you are very fond of chess; you had better accept Captain Montague's challenge, and I will bring my work, and come and look over you."

Amelia, turning to Captain Montague, said, "Very well, then, if you do not disdain a lady for your antagonist, we will begin."

Captain Montague, with alacrity, prepared the chess-board; the pieces were arranged, and the game begun with all proper gravity. Lady Allondale was faithful to her promise, and placed herself near them. In about half an hour, however, she was summoned to another apartment by the arrival of a person on business; and she had scarcely quitted the room when Sir Francis Leslie was announced.

His countenance, the instant he saw what was going on, changed; the tone of his voice, which on his entrance was that of familiar cordiality, became expressive of reserve and masqued displeasure. He resigned immediately the hand which had been offered to him, and, hastily bowing to Captain Montague, flung himself on a couch.

"Captain Montague," said Amelia, "we must defer our game for a while; for I am hostess during Lady Allondale's absence, and I must not be unmindful of my duties." Saying this she rose, and

rather hesitatingly moved towards Sir Francis.

"I beg you will go on with your game," said Sir Francis. "I should be very sorry to interrupt you;" and he took up a newspaper that was lying by him.

"Do you think," said Amelia smiling, "we could possibly be so deficient in courtesy, as to leave you to entertain yourself?"

"But I prefer entertaining myself; pray go on with your game."

"And did you come here to read the newspaper?" asked Amelia, still smiling. "If that was the case, I shall issue an order for its banishment the next time you call."

Sir Francis made no reply.

"Miss Cavendish," said Captain Montague at last, "are we to wait in attendance on this deaf and dumb man. Come, Leslie, confess you are thinking about those papers you told me you must be so busy with this morning."

Sir Francis, half ashamed of himself, and anxious also to conceal the jealous irritation by which he was disturbed, rose and said, that he could not think of being the cause why the game was not continued, and that it would give him pleasure to look over them while they played. The game was accordingly recommenced; but Amelia, uneasy and anxious, did not play with her former skill, and in the course of ten minutes she was defeated. She moved the board gently from her, and said in a low voice, "You see I am easily conquered."

"Easily, indeed!" said Captain Montague gravely. "What a pity, when our better judgment is so soon overpowered!"

Amelia coloured, and Sir Francis replied sarcastically: "You have a polite opponent, Miss Cavendish; he triumphs, because he has vanquished you."

Captain Montague, recalling his good-humour, remarked, "I am like those poor Romans who were not deemed

worthy of the superior triumph: mine is only an ovation."

"And to whom do you decree the greater triumph?" said Amelia gaily.

"To him who carries off the greater spoils, Miss Cavendish;" and he looked significantly at Sir Francis.

This remark, while it flattered the vanity of Sir Francis, soothed his ruffled temper; and with apparent cordiality a conversation was carried on by all, when Lady Allondale once more made her appearance.

Yet, after both gentlemen had taken their leave, the remembrance of what had passed came unpleasantly on the mind of Sir Francis. Displeased at Amelia for tolerating the admiration of Captain Montague — for jealousy is as discourteous as it is exclusive, — and angry with himself for his displeasure, he became extremely anxious for the departure of his guest. Captain Montague saw this; and undoubtedly he would have felt offended at the discovery, but for the self-compla-

cency of which he was sensible while making it. It was something that his presence was feared, and his attentions deprecated; yet he felt that every sentiment of honour and of prudence forbade his encouraging a passion for Amelia; and, too proud also to partake any longer of an hospitality which circumstances had rendered his host unwilling to bestow, he, two days afterwards, took his leave of Sydney.

Conscious of the lurking weakness of his heart, he paid no parting visit to Amelia. "I shall meet her in the winter," thought he; "and yet, why should I wish to meet her?"

Captain Bennet found himself so pleasantly situated, and fancied himself so agreeable, that he was easily prevailed on to stay a few days longer. He was certain that Lady Clanallan regarded him with interest; and when Lord Clanallan seemed inclined to dispense with his society, he good-humouredly forgave him, saying, "Poor fellow! what a pity

it is he is so jealous! And for the lady — sweet creature! — she is between two fires. It is astonishing how much at her ease she is in such a situation. But some people understand the world and its usages so well!"

Lady Clanallan at last became a little tired of Captain Bennet and his attentions. He was unfortunate enough to call on one day when she was on the point of driving into Northallerton, to see and to be seen, and on another, when she had letters of some importance to write — and on both these occasions Captain Bennet thought it polite and necessary to sacrifice an hour and a half of his time. It was sacrificed, indeed, in a double sense, for his conversation was as idle as usual; and what was worse, in his estimation, it was lost on Lady Clanallan. Captain Bennet began to find out that he could not talk with his usual volubility, and he fancied this was owing to the air of the country. Nothing, therefore, was left for him but to meditate a return to

London — and to London he did return, to the great joy of Amelia.

How pleasantly now would the time have glided on, had the present not been embittered by the anticipation of the future! But Sir Francis was to leave Sydney in a few days — and the summer too was melting into autumn — and the time would appear so long, and the weather so cheerless, when he was gone! She wished that the hour of his departure had arrived and passed, yet she felt relieved when circumstances were productive of delay. All these delays, however, had at length their termination, and Sir Francis tore himself from Amelia.

It was not in the disposition of either the one or the other to pine in general over the past; but Amelia remembered deeply now. The image of the man she loved, and by whom she was beloved, came continually upon her mind. She knew he was in London; but if she saw a stranger at a distance, she fancied it might be him. Every day at the post-

hour she thought of him; all reminded her of her lover.

It might be rather difficult to decide whether men or women are in general most permanently attached; a man who loves, goes into the world, and if he can resist its pleasures, he is immersed in its occupations. He learns to compare and to reason, and this is dangerous to love; for his empire is a monarchy, and his prerogative not to be interfered with. Still a man may be amused and reason, and yet find it impossible absolutely to forget. He has been accustomed to consider things seriously, and habit has a great deal to do with love, as well as with other things. He cannot bear to consider that he has committed himself idly; and if the object of his passion is estimable, he piques himself on the conquest he has made, and is unwilling to resign it. Pride may have marred some marriages; but, in return, vanity has been the cause of others. Besides, a man knows he has in some measure the command of his own

fate; he feels that he has the power to step forward and decide it — and the very idea is a snare!

And what is to be said now regarding the constancy of women? Certainly some women love fondly and devotedly; and when the disposition tends to the indulgence of a love thus devoted and fond, the peculiar circumstances which surround them, and the stillness of the sanctuary of the heart, combine to render the associations of sentiment more familiar, and its impressions more tender. They sit in the silence of their home, and imagination loves to people its solitude. The creations of a day-dream are delightful, for they remain motionless, if we wish to gaze on their beauty; they pass on, if we bid them give way to others. But as men will forget sometimes, it is fortunate for human happiness in the aggregate that there are women who can do so too. Then, for the picture must now be reversed, there come in aid of this forgetfulness, the va-

nities of the imagination — the intoxication of conquest. Every thing conspires to tempt the heart from an allegiance, which it has become painful, perhaps humiliating, to pay.

It is more easy in these cases to advance than to retreat; and besides, who would wish to retreat when the homage is so submissive, and the detention so agreeable? The weaker a woman feels herself to be, the more naturally she casts her reliance on him whose attentions soothe her hesitation, and gratify her pride. She yields because she has conquered first; for, to extend the allusion of Captain Montague, it was only in the triumphs of more barbarous days that the slave continued to be dragged to the chariot-wheel.

CHAP. IV.

"Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love!—
A something light as air—a look—
A word unkind, or wrongly taken.
Oh! love that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch, like this hath shaken!"

Lalla Rookh.

'The play's the thing—"

Hamlet

It is time to speak again of Mrs. Cavendish, and tell what difference had or had not been made in her situations, her opinions, her sentiments, by the lapse of years. The elasticity of youthful hope had gone with hope itself; the smile of arch sensibility—for sensibility is not always the result of simplicity of feeling—had long been exchanged for one less animated, though perhaps as graceful; the form was not so slight, the tone more slowly modulated; but still health and tranquillity had breathed so upon

her life, that there was beauty yet upon her cheek, and almost all of its former expression in her eye. She had felt severely her disappointment in regard to Colonel Onslow: she had shown, however, more of the feeling of offended pride than of sorrow when they first met after his defection, if so it might be called, had taken place; and conscious of her power, she had ventured too far. His mind had not been able to shake off entirely the unfavourable impression which it had received, and his manner was cold in proportion. This was a manner Mrs. Cavendish had not been accustomed to see. She was displeased; and she affected a similar indifference. He had learnt that it was possible to fling aside his chain; and he fancied he had broken it. The mistake was a natural one enough; but a mistake that cost both him and Mrs. Cavendish dear; for the result was, that in temporary disgust at each other they parted. He won honour and renown upon the continent; and she, when their

echoes stole on her retirement, felt proud that she had selected him from other men; and this sentiment of pride called back her affection. It was impossible he could know the secret changes of her heart; he was occupied besides by ambition. Love had failed him; ambition kept her promises; and when, by successive staff appointments at the Cape of Good Hope and in the West Indies, his military fortunes were advanced, he cared little for the changes that were preparing for his destiny, and could almost have said with Childe Harold — so much had the prospects of his life been blighted —

> "With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go
> Across the foaming brine;
> Nor care what land thou bear me to,
> So not again to mine."

It is strange how the natural feelings of the heart — the generosity of emotion — the sweetnesses of affection — the complacency which waits on its self-gratulation — it is strange how so much of no-

ble, and tender, and exulting gives way beneath the icy touch of disppointment, and the pressure of an involuntary and perhaps an almost insensible despair. They are trampled upon; they are defaced; and if ever they breathe forth again, there is a sign of withering still left upon their beauty, which testifies of the past.

Colonel Onslow spent year after year away from England. He often thought of Mrs. Cavendish; but it was to think of her as of one who had played false with some of the best feelings and dearest hopes of his heart; and he looked upon it as next to impossible that he should ever design to restore her to the rank she had forfeited in his opinion, and absolutely impossible that she could once again prove worthy of being thus restored. Such was the change that had taken place in the sentiments of Onslow. It must be remembered, that he was separated by the ocean from her whom he had once so fondly loved, and how differently do we

argue in the absence and in the presence of those we love! As for Mrs. Cavendish, her day of pride was past; she forgave him, and she wished for his return. She had taken a sort of dislike to Captain Dallas, because he had been the cause of the estrangement between her and Col. Onslow. Captain Dallas, however, would not submit to be disliked with impunity; he spoke with some bitterness of the deception which he said had been practised on him; and he would have done this still longer, but for a reconciliation which he contrived to effect by some means or other with Mrs. Cavendish a short time after Colonel Onslow had sailed for the Cape. He did not lose the advantage he had gained. Mrs. Cavendish began to be amused with his conversation, and to think the time passed more agreeably in his presence. Captain Dallas again preferred his suit; she hesitated ere she gave her reply; and it was something for her to hesitate. She felt that Colonel Onslow was lost to her for ever; she

wished to show that she did not pine after him; but though he was lost, she found he was not forgotten; and neither her feeling nor her honour would permit her to become the wife of another.

Captain Dallas received his dismissal, and three months after she saw his marriage in the paper.

It is unnecessary to enter farther into the detail of past events, except to say, that as Colonel Onslow continued to absent himself, Mrs. Cavendish devoted herself more and more to her child. That child only lost the placid beauty of infancy, to assume the winning charms of childhood; and so graceful and so gradual was the change that led her on to an age more interesting still, that she appeared to carry the innocent unconsciousness and unruffled feelings of the one into the other.

Partaking far more of her father's disposition than of her mother's, she promised to pass through life with ease to

herself, and giving happiness to those around her.

Mrs. Cavendish saw that her child would make a tender and devoted wife; she saw too, that, submissive and modest as she was, she would obey implicitly any wish that came sanctioned to her by the authority of a parent. It was, however, far from the intentions of Mrs. Cavendish to impose on the generosity of a nature as mild as that of Henrietta; but events will speak for themselves. She still continued to reside at Wimbledon: the autumn and the winter, however, were frequently spent at Bath or Cheltenham. At the time when Sir Francis Leslie arrived from Yorkshire, after his parting with Amelia, Mrs. Cavendish and her daughter were at Wimbledon.

Mr. Cavendish received Sir Francis at once with courtesy and kindness. He suffered him to run on in praise of Amelia; and a father in these cases is no bad listener to a lover. But he drew him at

length to discussions of more importance, and gave him the benefit of his counsel and experience. For the first week, and for the one that succeeded it, all went on smoothly and propitiously. Sir Francis was domesticated in Hill Street, and no man filled the office of host more agreeably than Mr. Cavendish. At the end of this fortnight, however, a letter from Mrs. Fitzgerald announced to the latter the alarming illness of Sir Henry. That excellent old man had enjoyed till lately an unusual portion of good health; he had received a severe shock in the death of Lady Caroline. But the aged are accustomed to suffering; and those who suffer long are martyrs, not only as far as regards the pain, but in the calmness of the endurance. To Devonshire Mr. Cavendish, on learning the news of his uncle's illness, resolved to set out immediately; he could offer no apology to Sir Francis, and Sir Francis, while he regretted his departure, and its cause, felt that no apology was necessary. "You had better,

Leslie," said Mr. Cavendish, as he took leave of him, "make yourself as much at home at Wimbledon as you can; Mrs. Cavendish will, I know, be glad to see you, and you will find Henrietta a delightful girl — only less delightful than your and my Amelia."

With this recommendation, Mr. Cavendish parted from Sir Francis. The latter scarcely knew what to do with himself now: unfitted for study, both because the tenor of his later life had lain amidst the gay hurry of fashionable society, and because his mind was preoccupied with an idea that rendered him averse to any exertion which might interfere decidedly with its indulgence, he shrunk from the anticipation even of occasional solitude. Then, too, it was that time of the year when London professes to be dull, and when every body finds it to be so. How complaisant that a great city should condescend to tell its inhabitants that it is necessary to go into the country! And how complaisant that its inhabitants should

obey the periodical mandate, when the loveliness of the country had summoned them in vain before!

Sir Francis thought there was an air of stupidity in the very stones, as the wheels of Mr. Cavendish's carriage passed rapidly over them; and the heavy autumnal dust that garnished many a closed window in the street, seemed to tell him he had no business to stay in it. But stay Sir Francis Leslie must, whether he liked it or not, for he had entangled himself amongst the rogueries of agents, and the consultations of lawyers; and it is one thing to get entangled, and another to get free.

It so happened, that Mr. Hammond was just at this period in town. He had arrived only two days before, and had written a hasty note to Mr. Cavendish, to say that he should call on him shortly. Sir Francis had some curiosity to ascertain whether Mr. Hammond had understood the *supercherie* of Amelia: besides, he was glad to see any one just now; and, accordingly, when he heard

Mr. Hammond's name announced, he flung aside, with no feeling of annoyance at the interruption, the last number of the Quarterly Review, and rose with some alacrity to welcome him. Hammond was a man of the world in many things; but his temper was irritable, and sometimes he showed it to be so: certainly at this moment he was scarcely in the mood to play the agreeable. He had a tolerable idea of his own consequence, for from his youth he had been officially connected with great men; and although the want of high talent had stood in the way of his obtaining situations of paramount responsibility, he had never lost an inch of the ground he had gained; and was considered a capital diplomatist of the secondary rank, inasmuuch as the very shrewdness of his ill nature enabled him to detect the doublings of intriguers, and the manœuverings of cabinets. The habits of his every-day life were tinged by his public employments: officialisms crept into the style of his private letters; and if he found

no plots, he fancied them, or made them. Now he suspected, and with reason, that Sir Francis had been no inactive agent in the joke that had been passed on him. He had kept it wisely to himself; telling Mr. Cavendish, in phraseology jesuitical enough, that Miss Cavendish had sent him a free translation of the Spanish, and that he perceived she perfectly understood what she was about. He entered the drawing-room, accordingly, in the frame of mind that was alluded to above; for he knew that he was to meet there, in lieu of the father of the young lady whom he professed to admire, the young gentleman who chose to admire her also.

"Ah! Mr. Hammond," said Sir Francis, "how are you? A most welcome visit, I assure you. I am dying of *ennui* here. Mr. Cavendish set off this morning for Devonshire."

"So I find," replied Hammond. "I hope Sir Henry is not dangerously ill; but at his time of life every attack is

alarming. He has had a most wonderful constitution."

"Yes," said Sir Francis; "and he deserves the tranquil health he has enjoyed. He has been wiser than the world in general takes the trouble to be. He has stood aloof from the bustle of public life; and his private life has not been an idle one."

"Yet, Sir Francis, it is well, too, that there are men who will condescend to mix with public life a little. We ought to guard against the dangerous tendency to inaction. How many men, when they have nothing to compel them to assiduity or to enterprize, suffer the indolence of habit to interfere even with the opinions of the mind! For my part I have so few leisure moments on my hands, that when I look upon the idleness of the gay world, I say to myself, 'What a pity those people are not obliged to be busy!'"

"The gay world is much indebted to you, certainly," said Sir Francis, laughing;

"but depend upon it, it is busy in its own way; and that there is as much of manœuvring, and anxiety, and restlessness, and competition, in the circle through which it moves, as in the cabinet itself; and each of them is the very reverse of the Bath of Beauty, celebrated in the annals of pantomime; for I defy any one to come out purer than he went in."

"But I hope," said Hammond gravely, "you allow that the importance of the object pursued in the last of these circles rather outweighs that which is trifled with in the other."

"Oh! when you come to trifling, I have done. Trifling is dangerous work sometimes, as men, and women too, have found to their cost."

"But, Sir Francis, is there no kind of trifling that is admissible? For instance; it must be perfectly allowable in a lady, provided she is a beauty, to laugh at any honest-hearted gentleman who has found out that she is so. I think I have known such things."

The expression of Hammond's countenance was so marked, that Sir Francis saw at once the recollections that were rankling in his mind; but he went on, as if perfectly in the dark.

"There is no arguing, undoubtedly, against experience; yet, perhaps, those of whom you speak may have drawn the laugh, or whatever it might chance to have been, on themselves; for women hate to be bored with fine speeches, and tender looks, when they have not time to attend to them. And then there is this advantage to be reaped from the conduct you allude to, — a man may take warning in time, and save himself the pain of a refusal."

"A very generous motive found out for an ungracious action! You remind me of an historian who tells us all the secret feelings of the great persons he is writing about; only that the historian refers us, when this case happens to be peculiarly delicate, to some document in the appendix. What a pity, Sir Francis,

you cannot ground your remarks on some such kind of secret correspondence!"

"I hate the very name of secret correspondence," said Sir Francis, somewhat anxious to change the conversation. "it raises up before me images of awful letters — ghosts of departed ciphers — and the echoes of head-quarter whispers. I was once in my life admitted to see and hear something of these things; for I had an idea it might be very agreeable and convenient to visit the Continent officially. Cavendish had argued till I believed him, and at length fairly introduced me to the scene; but it would not do. I could not chain down my mind to the mysteries of diplomacy: it was all very well to write letters to-day, if I might have been allowed to forget the letters of yesterday; but no, the genius of consistency turned pale at such a supposition, and for fear of accidents I made my best bow, and departed."

"Like other men, I presume, Sir Francis, in more perplexing situations still;

and, after all, it is easier to understand a minister than a woman. The best of it is, too, some women are quite indignant at being understood — patience and perseverance do every thing with them."

"Indeed!" said Sir Francis; "but for me I have no patience. I am sure now I shall have none while I am chained to this odious town, at the very moment when I would give the world to be in the country; but I shall run down to Brighton for three or four days next week, and in the mean time I must doze over the Morning Post at the club in the morning — smother myself with dust in the empty Park — and grow stupid over an uninteresting dinner afterwards. As for to-day, I mean by and by to ride down to Wimbledon, and see Mrs. Cavendish. Have you seen her daughter, Mr. Hammond? — a very lovely creature, indeed. If a man were not in love before-hand, he could not fail to fall in love with Henrietta: I really would recommend you to think of it. There is, however, a quie-

tude about her that takes off, in my opinion at least, from her beauty. To be sure my ideas may be wrong; we all erect our own standard of beauty; we compare always, you know — what think you? Seriously speaking, however, Henrietta is *charming*, — *a nymph of the woods, whose footstep sounds always as if it were passing over moss.*"

Hammond smiled, and the conversation took a different turn. On his departure Sir Francis set off for Wimbledon. Mrs. Cavendish was delighted to see him: he had always been a favourite of hers, and her general manner to him had in it a degree of tenderness imperceptible almost to others, but of the existence of which she was, in part at least, conscious herself. He was the son of the man whom she had certainly once passionately loved; and the tone of his voice, and the expression of his eye, reminded her of the past. Could she but have indulged the hope of giving to Sir Francis her own Henrietta! But while Henrietta was yet

a child she had been compelled to abandon the idea; for Mr. Cavendish spoke of his wishes in regard to Amelia, and Mr. Cavendish was not a man to be interfered with. Years past on: she knew that Mr. Cavendish had found circumstances favour his wishes, and she was continually reminded also, that it would be natural and proper for Henrietta to become attached to her cousin Harry. She did not, perhaps, desire this latter union herself; but neither was there any other that she could desire just now, and she resolved to let things take their own course, as long as there existed no occasion for interference. Just at the time Sir Francis called, she had much to engage and interest her thoughts. She daily expected to hear of the arrival of Colonel Onslow in England: she said to herself that she had no wish to see him, and undoubtedly he who has been looked on as a lover, is scarcely welcome as a friend; but he was the guardian of Henrietta, and she knew that they must meet.

Her secret anxiety, however, did not prevent her enjoying as much as usual the society of Sir Francis: every thing was done to make his visit pleasant, and to induce him to render it a long one. There was no difficulty in obtaining his consent to his own gratification, and Sir Francis remained to dinner. Henrietta, accustomed to look on him as the future husband of her cousin, stood on no ceremony with him. She played the harp for his amusement, almost before he requested it, — she made him hold for her a skein of netting silk, and told him his fortune from a set of cards she had framed herself. He had seldom seen her exert herself so much, and he was as pleased as he was surprised. The fact was, that Henrietta had remarked he was not in his usual spirits, and she was anxious to bring them back to him. In this she certainly succeeded; and he told them at parting, that they must expect often to be tormented with his company, as Wimbledon was infinitely pleasanter than Lon-

don. In three days he was there again; and Henrietta, although he was in better spirits now, was bound to be as agreeable as she was before. He found out that there was no occasion for his going down to Brighton, — and the days glided rapidly away.

The theatres had been opened for some time; and Sir Francis entreated Mrs. Cavendish and Henrietta to go under his escort to one or other of them. Mrs. Cavendish was fond of theatricals, and she consented to visit Covent Garden.

"Charles Pembroke is in town," said Sir Francis, "and I am sure he will be happy to be of the party; then I will get my friend Bennet, who is a capital hand at bustling through public places, only I must give him a caution not to talk as much as usual, as we go really to hear the play, and we will have St. Helier of the Lancers, who never says a word. By the by, Mrs. Cavendish, did you ever see him? He is really an honourable, excellent-hearted fellow, with all his pecu-

harities: he should not have been a soldier, however, that is certain, except for his bravery; and there he stands unimpeached — and, what is better, unimpeachable."

"Yes, I have met him occasionally at parties; and at Lady Clanallan's, last spring, he was seated next me at dinner. His politeness is the most measured I ever saw, and stately enough for an Earl Marshal. He appears always as if he were in a court-dress, and that, too, not of the newest fashion."

"Come, come, no abuse of St. Helier: you will find him very gallant at the theatre, I assure you. So off I shall ride, post-haste, to town, to engage the stage-box."

The day appointed for the visit to the theatre came. Sir Francis was at Wimbledon at an early hour, and in the gayest spirits.

"Mamma," said Henrietta to Mrs. Cavendish, as they were making preparations for their departure, "Sir Francis

seems to have forgotten that he is away from Amelia."

Mrs. Cavendish thought so too; but she was surprised that this idea had occurred to the simplicity of Henrietta. After the observation had been made, Mrs. Cavendish remained for a minute or two in a sort of meditative silence; but rousing herself suddenly, she said — "What was I thinking of? He is waiting for us all this while. Come, Henrietta."

Had Sir Francis indeed forgotten Amelia? Amelia was not one who could be so easily forgotten. He loved her, as he had ever loved her; that is to say, when he remembered her. But it must be confessed, that in the animation and the charms of that society in which he had lately been accustomed to pass much of his time, he did occasionally cease to recollect her. If any one had accused him of such defection, he would have confidently stood on his defence; and if at last he had been made sensible of it, he would have withdrawn himself

immediately from a presence so ensnaring. Henrietta — how could he fail to admire Henrietta? And she was Amelia's cousin; and how could he help loving the cousin of Amelia?

Thus stood affairs on the evening when he accompanied Mrs. Cavendish and Henrietta to the theatre. Charles Pembroke, the son of the old acquaintance of Mrs. Cavendish, was just about to ascend the staircase, as the door swung open behind him: he caught sight of them instantly, and was at their side almost as soon. He was at this time about seven-and-twenty: his father had been dead some years, and he was in possession of a handsome independence. But he was not one who wished to enjoy the blessings of fortune in the midst of idleness, and he performed assiduously the honourable duties of a situation he had procured under government. The party was scarcely seated in the box, when the door being opened with all gentle ceremony, Colonel St. Helier made

his appearance. He was a tall, stately-looking man, in the prime of life; and the expression of his countenance bore a marked resemblance to that which strikes us in the portraits of the unfortunate Charles the First. Although dressed with the greatest precision, he looked scarcely like one who would have deigned to consider the effect of his personal appearance; but there was, notwithstanding, a somewhat peculiar curve given to the mustachio on the upper lip.

Colonel St. Helier bowed slowly to Mrs. Cavendish; and the few words with which it was necessary to accompany such a salutation were spoken with the distinct gravity peculiar to him. He then seated himself near her, and was pleased enough that the commencement of the overture afforded a reason, or at least an excuse, for his silence. The play began; it was a tragedy, and a deep one: and the unsophisticated Henrietta, though ashamed to weep before strangers, shed many tears. She was not, however, with those

who think it fashionable to smile at the sensibilities of an unvitiated heart. The Colonel looked at her, and evidently with pleasure, and then turned and addressed Mrs. Cavendish in a tone implying that he was really interested in what he was speaking about. Charles Pembroke had just asked a question of Sir Francis relative to Amelia, and the latter, with all a lover's animation, had commenced his reply, when Captain Bennet threw open the door, and, with his hand upon the lock, continued standing at the entrance. Sir Francis turned round — "Ah! Bennet, is it you: we had given you up. For Heaven's sake shut the door and come down: the wind is intolerable."

"But am I right?" cried Bennet.

"Right! — To be sure. What else should you be? Come, come, my good fellow, there is room for you here."

"This is not the number you told me, Leslie, I am positive."

"Never mind the number, come and sit down," and Captain Bennet

closing the door with violence, made his way towards them.

"Pray who is that gentleman?" said Colonel St. Helier in a low tone to Mrs. Cavendish.

"He is a Captain Bennet. I have often heard Sir Francis mention him, but I never saw him before."

"He will be an admirable commentator on the tragedy," continued Colonel St. Helier, "for he will unquestionably understand the *full meaning of the* author."

"Or give a meaning to it that the *author never meant?*" asked Mrs. Cavendish, "that is, what other commentators do, you know."

"Leslie, Leslie," said Captain Bennet, "introduce me; because although it be very true that a good countenance is the best letter of recommendation, people will not think of reading it till it is necessary to do so."

"Very well, then, I will introduce you. Mrs. Cavendish, allow me to pre-

sent Captain Bennet to you." Mrs. Cavendish bowed.

"This is a very hot night, madam," said Captain Bennet, smiling to the full extent of his front teeth.

"I don't know, I thought it was rather cold just now. We are at the very end of autumn, and it is fair to expect it should be so."

"I am afraid it was my unlucky opening of the door that reminded you of the season. Upon my honour, I stood there like a man bewildered; but you must pardon me, I was absolutely confounded by the glare of the stage-lamps, and by brighter beams than those," and Captain Bennet smiled again.

"Hush!" said Colonel St. Helier, with apparent unconsciousness, though at the same time fully aware of what he was saying; "Hush! the curtain rises again."

Captain Bennet stared, and was silent.

The eyes of Henrietta were fixed on the stage for a while, and her heart was

with her eyes. Once or twice, however, she ventured timidly to glance around the circle, at the extremity of which she sat. At length she appeared somewhat suddenly confused, but no one observed her confusion except Colonel St. Helier, who had plenty of time to observe every thing. He sat on the other side of her mother. "Mamma," whispered Henrietta at length, "look at the third box from us — look at those two gentlemen in the second row."

"Well, and why am I to do this?"

"Because — because, mamma, they have had their eyes fixed on this box in such a strange manner."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Cavendish, "then I am half afraid to look at them; but to please you I will."

Her eye followed accordingly the direction given by her daughter. One of the gentlemen had his face turned from her. The profile of the other she could distinguish clearly. The countenance, without being strictly handsome, was

noble and intelligent. A few locks of brown hair waved over his forehead, and the expression of his eye was at once animated and dignified. Mrs. Cavendish had a confused recollection of having seen the face before. She wished that his companion would turn, that she might see him also. He did turn at last — it was Colonel Onslow.

Their eyes met. His lip was instantly compressed, and his glance withdrawn. The burning colour mounted to the cheek of Mrs. Cavendish, and retreating immediately back upon the heart, the hand that had fallen on Henrietta's became cold as marble.

Henrietta started. — "Mamma, what is the matter with you? Are you ill? Shall we go home?"

"No, my dear child, I shall be better directly. I had rather not go. It is nothing."

Colonel St. Helier begged to know if he could be of any service. She answered him she was quite well again, and

she only affirmed what was true. Anxiety — the deep interest she felt in every sound she heard; such, for instance, as the opening or closing of a box-door, a wish to watch the movements of Colonel Onslow, and a dread lest he should fancy or perceive that she did so, completely annihilated that overwhelming feeling which, for a moment or two, had mastered the faculties of her soul. Then box had been partly vacated: Captain Bennet was in the full career of his eloquence, when "How are you, St. Heller?" caused the speaker to pause, and the listeners to look round.

"Ah! De Beauvoir — welcome, welcome!" said the Colonel, proffering his hand with unaccustomed cordiality.

"And may I not be welcomed by more than one?" cried Lord De Beauvoir, and he looked at Mrs. Cavendish.

"As welcome now as ever, my Lord," she replied; "and you know it is the best compliment I can offer; best, because of its truth."

"And truth," said Lord De Beauvoir, "is unfortunately not always linked with compliments; therefore it is doubly acceptable."

"Now," said Bennet, "I must beg leave to differ from this honourable company. There is a way of saving the conscience in these things. For example, we might compliment a lady on her complexion, knowing it to be false; nevertheless the complexion is beautiful, though it does not belong to the lady."

Colonel St. Helier glanced at Captain Bennet with the air of one who had not heard nor understood a word of what had been said. Lord de Beauvoir smiled.

"Who was that with you just now?" asked Colonel St. Helier, with, as Mrs. Cavendish thought, some degree of curiosity in his manner.

"*He who was on my left hand?*"

"Yes."

Lord De Beauvoir hesitated. "It was Onslow," said he at length: "Colonel Onslow of the 14th dragoons," and

he glanced his eye at Mrs. Cavendish. "An old friend of mine — a very old friend, and a most excellent one." Again he paused; and then, with sudden vivacity, he exclaimed: "Ah! how delighted I am to find myself in this charmed circle! and like other people, when enchanted, it will be in vain to endeavour to step beyond it."

The after-piece, a brilliant combination of nonsense, now commenced, and no one thought of talking sense while it continued. When the figures on the stage had grouped themselves for the final scene, Mrs. Cavendish and Henrietta rose to go. She consigned Henrietta to the care of Colonel St. Helier and Pembroke, and followed her, escorted by Lord de Beauvoir and Sir Francis Leslie.

While the party waited for the carriage in the entrance-hall, Colonel Onslow slowly passed at some little distance from them. He exchanged a look with De Beauvoir, and then bowed to Mrs. Cavendish. This bow was any thing but

familiar, — the inclination of her head in return was any thing but formal. Colonel Onslow gazed at her for a moment, and went on.

The carriage drew up; and she was on the point of entering it — "Good-night, Mrs. Cavendish" — said a voice, which she had once loved to hear, and which it affected her to hear again.

She looked round: he was standing behind Lord De Beauvoir. Without a moment's hesitation she tendered him her hand. "When shall we see you at Wimbledon, Colonel Onslow? Have you been long in town?"

"I can answer for it, Mrs. Cavendish," cried Captain Bennet, "that Colonel Onslow has been in town some time; for now I recollect I had the honour of meeting him three weeks ago at the club in St. James's Street."

"Me! Sir?" said Colonel Onslow, hastily. "It is just possible, certainly; but allow me to say, I have no recollection of the circumstance."

"And that is just possible, too, Colonel Onslow. I never care how soon the gentlemen forget me, as long as the ladies do not."

"You will come to Wimbledon, then, Colonel Onslow? Good-night;" and Mrs. Cavendish gently withdrew her hand.

"Certainly, it is fit that I should come and talk about Henrietta." He smiled at his young ward: she courtesied timidly, and followed her mother.—"Good-night again." The carriage drove off, and the groupe dispersed.

CHAP. V.

"But say what nymph will prize the flame
Which seems, as marshy vapours move,
To flit along from dame to dame,
An ignis fatuus gleam of love?"

LORD BYRON.

"I would have thee gone;
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,
That lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving jealous of his liberty."

Romeo and Juliet

It is frequently the case in human life, that events, be they happy or otherwise, crowd upon each other: it seems as if the touch had been given to a train of circumstances, which must necessarily have their place in quick succession, and which draws us within their vortex till we are unwilling, perhaps unable, to stop. So it was to be with Mrs. Cavendish. Years of quiet and security, embittered doubtlessly by harassing recollections, and

anxiety as to the future, but still essentially quiet and secure, had been her portion since the last parting which had taken place between herself and Colonel Onslow. He was returned, and though it was not likely he should be any thing to her, she felt that the even tenor of her tranquillity was over. Her daughter, too, — the beautiful, the innocent Henrietta! — she was about to enter on the trials of the world; for surely, pure and guileless though she was, the world would have trials for her. She was not yet sixteen; she was scarcely as tall as her mother; her complexion was fair, her form symmetrically moulded. She had been seen by few; and even had she been seen by more, there were not many men who would have thought her handsomer than Amelia; for Amelia, with a face and figure as true to beauty as her cousin, had, besides, that manner, and that nameless fascination, which captivates even where neither feature nor form would do so otherwise. Amelia was still in York-

shire; for the lengthened stay of her father in Devonshire had presented an obstacle to her return to London. And where, in the mean time, was her lover? Away most generally from London also, but not with her.

Three days passed, and Colonel Onslow had not called at Wimbledon. Sir Francis had been there the greater part of the second, and on the third, while he was copying a pattern for Henrietta, a phaeton drove to the door. Mrs. Cavendish started; but there was no occasion for the involuntary motion: the visitors were Lord De Beauvoir and Colonel St. Helier. She was glad to see them both — particularly glad to see De Beauvoir, both on his own account, and because he was the intimate friend of Colonel Onslow. She saw that time had not interfered with the animation which in early youth had sat so gracefully upon him. He bore on his countenance the evidence of having passed through the vivid summer of his life without having tarnished the honour

of his soul, or incurred those regrets which visit too often souls even of such untarnished honour. He had not thrown away idly the dignity and exertions of the mind — he had not wasted the affections of the heart. Early as was De Beauvoir's age, when first he called himself in love, he had not been equally susceptible afterwards. He had taken warning, perhaps, by the disappointment of his friend, or he had had enough of it himself.

As Colonel St. Helier, after a short conversation with Sir Francis, sat and said nothing, Mrs. Cavendish was rather surprised that he should have taken the trouble to accompany Lord De Beauvoir to Wimbledon. Sir Francis Leslie, however, thought he knew the reason, and thought, too, that the Colonel might just as well have staid away.

The Album of Henrietta was on the table: Colonel St. Helier begged her permission to look over its pages. "These

are complimentary verses, Miss Cavendish," said he gravely.

"What verses do you mean?" said Henrietta blushing.

"These beginning —

"O do not bid me chain my thought."

"Indeed, Colonel St. Helier, I do not know what you mean: I do not recollect the line at all."

"Strange — excessively strange! If I might be permitted, I could name the author."

"O pray do," said Henrietta, scarcely knowing what she said, and she blushed again. "No, no — I mean I wish to see them: pray give the book to me."

Colonel St. Helier never contested a point with a lady; and he rose and met her half way. Lord De Beauvoir and Mrs. Cavendish had paused in the midst of a lively conversation. Sir Francis was leaning over a collection of prints.

"My love," said Mrs. Cavendish, "what is the mystery about these verses?"

"No mystery, mamma, that I know of,—that is—but I am sure—" she stopt, and added gently, "Come here, mamma."

The instant Mrs. Cavendish saw the hand-writing, she exclaimed, "Why these verses must be yours, Sir Francis!"

"What if I make my confession?" said Sir Francis, laughing. "Do I not deserve to be expelled your society for having been able to write any thing amidst the agreeable idleness of this day? I should not certainly have had the presumption to have left any record of mine on those pages, but for a request Miss Cavendish made me this morning, which I thought rather an unreasonable one."

"I?" cried Henrietta, in evident alarm—"I make you a request, Sir Francis? Mamma, what can he mean?"

"What can I mean, my dear Henrietta? Did you not ask me this morn-

ing to read some of Mill's History of the Crusades?"

"Well!" said Henrietta.

"Well — I said it was too beautiful a day for reading, and that we had better walk. You recollect that, I suppose?"

"Yes; but what has all this to do with the verses?"

"Have patience. When you went up for your shawl along with your mamma, I took advantage of my solitude — and you know ladies are very long in their preparations sometimes — to enter a written protest against the task you would fain have imposed on me in that pretty Album of yours."

"Henrietta said nothing. Mrs. Cavendish smiled — "Come, let us hear the lines. Colonel St. Helier, you discovered them first: it is all fair you should be the agent in making us acquainted with them."

"I am not particularly fond of poetry, madam," said St. Helier. "I am afraid I should not do the composition jus-

tice; but if you lay your commands upon me——"

"Come, come," cried Lord De Beauvoir, "give the book to me. I like every thing that is beautiful, whether it is in nature or in art; and the art of poetry, we all know, is carried to such perfection now, that there is frequently no nature in it. Not that I mean to be guilty of passing such judgment here; for when a gentleman like Sir Francis Leslie writes, and such a lady as Miss Cavendish is the muse who inspires him, it were treason against poetry, and against something better than poetry, to imagine for an instant that either could be trifled with."

Henrietta hid her head on the back of her mother's chair. Colonel St. Helier stroked the favourite mustachio. De Beauvoir looked at St. Helier.

He did not look long. He had promised to read: it was incumbent on him to do so.

O do not bid me chain my thought
To storied page or lofty line:
The tales of old I value not,
When listening to those words of thine.

A spell is on my mind — my heart;
Mid gentle scenes and sounds I dwell,
Then do not bid the dream depart,
The fairy dream I love so well.

I read on that untainted cheek
All that on earth is bright and dear:
It were but folly's quest to seek
For lovelier things than greet me here.

There was a pause, after the perusal of this little effusion, which it was not the easiest thing in the world to break. Lord De Beauvoir at length spoke:—"I wish I could write such lines as these: would you give them a place in your Album, Miss Cavendish?"

Henrietta had been altogether so distressed and flurried at the notice that had been drawn on her, that the tears were starting from her eyes. She attempted to answer Lord De Beauvoir, but she could not.

"Go, my love," said Mrs. Cavendish, "go and bring here the beautiful drawing which your drawing-master lent you to copy. It is a view in Corfu," said she, turning to Lord De Beauvoir, as Henrietta left the room. "You must tell us whether it is a correct one."

"If Miss Cavendish would like to see drawings of Ionian scenery, and will forgive their defects in consideration of their fidelity, I would venture to bring her, some day, two or three sketches of mine, which I took while wandering along the sea-beach. She will see introduced in them the peasant and common soldier of the country, not in the style that romances describe them, but in the dress they actually wear. How difficult," he added, "is it to get at the truth in books! Things sound so differently in description; besides, it is necessary a description should be properly arranged and filled out. While abroad, I used to take notes at the time of what fell under my observation; but I began to be afraid I should

be tempted to amplify them in my leisure moments; and, to get rid of the temptation, I threw them out of my cabin-window one rainy morning on my voyage home."

"I can assure you, De Beauvoir," said Colonel St. Helier, "that had the sun shone brightly, you would not have destroyed your papers. You were not in the mood just then to be pleased, or we should have had another noble author on the list. Sir Francis, who, it appears, understands those things, will, I am convinced, coincide with me."

"I defy you, St. Helier, or any body else," said De Beauvoir, laughing, "to tell when I am in the mood to be pleased or not. For instance, give me your opinion: am I in a pleasant frame of mind at this moment?"

"Really we have no reason for supposing the contrary," said Mrs. Cavendish gaily.

"As I have been appealed to so

seriously," said the Colonel, "it is incumbent on me to answer."

"A strange manner Lord De Beauvoir must have of being serious," said Sir Francis, half aside, to Mrs. Cavendish.

"I presume," continued Colonel St. Helier, with his usual imperturbability, "that no gentleman, Lord De Beauvoir, enters the presence of ladies without a desire to render himself agreeable to them; therefore ——"

"Indeed!" said De Beauvoir, with another laugh. "It is a pity, with such good intentions, that so many should fail! I have to thank my presiding star for my better fortune. You will perceive," said he, bowing with all St. Helier's ceremony, to Mrs. Cavendish, "that I rest my confidence on the judgment you passed. St. Helier, not another word: the decision is a final one. And now for the Ionian islands:—here comes Miss Cavendish."

Henrietta entered placidly beautiful, as usual: she brought up, for Lord De Beauvoir's particular inspection, the drawing

of her master. St. Helier moved from his chair to look at it too, not perhaps on account of the sketch itself, but he moved, and that was enough. It would have been too much to have expected him to speak also; besides, Lord De Beauvoir, eloquent as ever, was the only critic who at this moment was to be heard. He compared painting with sculpture, and the moderns with the ancients. He left sculpture for inscriptions, and who could talk of inscriptions without adding notices of ruins? Henrietta was wrapt in mute attention, and her chair was insensibly drawn nearer to Lord De Beauvoir's. True, she had seen the drawing before, but she had never heard so entertaining a criticism, or discussion, or whatever it might be, as this. Lord De Beauvoir was certainly gratified by the attention which he excited; but it may be doubted whether his feeling of gratification was equal in degree to a feeling precisely the contrary, which predominated in others who were present. Sir

Francis Leslie, in love or not in love, was vain: the vanity was good humoured, indeed, and seldom offensive, but still it was vanity; and in this instance he was annoyed that a stranger should contest with him the right and the power to please Henrietta. Colonel St. Helier hated dissertations, and he thought that De Beauvoir's anecdotes were dissertations, and long ones too. Mrs. Cavendish tried to engage St. Helier in conversation, and he endeavoured both to listen and to speak; but it was evident that he neither attended to her words nor to his own, and it was scarcely possible that when she perceived this, she could converse with as much ease as she had done before. Fortunately, Lord De Beauvoir came to her relief; and when the drawing was laid aside, every thing went on smoothly again. The gentlemen at length rose to go. "I had a message to deliver to you, Mrs. Cavendish," said De Beauvoir gaily. "I crave pardon for having forgotten it till now."

"What message, and from whom, Lord De Beauvoir?" asked she with quickness.

"I give my briefest answer first—from Colonel Onslow."

"He is well, I hope?"

"Perfectly;—and he begged me to say that he would have waited on you ere this, but for some official business which has taken up his time."

"And may I expect him soon? Tell him I shall not forgive him if the delay is much longer."

"De Beauvoir," said Colonel St. Helier, "it strikes me that your friend Colonel Onslow is somewhat dilatory in his movements; for I recollect that agreeable gentleman, Captain Bennet, affirmed, the other night, that he had been three weeks in town already."

"Onslow has had a great deal to do," answered De Beauvoir carelessly; "but he will plead his own cause best: will he not, Mrs. Cavendish?"

She smiled: that was the only reply she could make, and as favourable a one

as Lord De Beauvoir expected to receive.

In less than two hours he was with Colonel Onslow. The latter still retained possession of the house in Dover-Street. He had parted with it on lease for a few years during his absence from England, and it had just reverted into his own hands. It was in the half-furnished library of this house, therefore, in that same room where De Beauvoir had once, years before, visited him so inopportunely, that they now conversed together.

"You have seen her, then, De Beauvoir? *You have given her my message?* It is evident I must go," and Onslow twisted a pamphlet he had been reading through his fingers.

"Must go! This is a good joke, Onslow. Is the necessity so very painful?"

"Painful! any thing but painful; yet certainly not any thing that is pleasant."

"Well, then, if the business will neither be painful nor pleasant, there is no occasion to care any thing about it."

"I do not care about it, — you mistake me; but it will be inconvenient, very inconvenient, for me to go to-morrow."

"I did not know you were going to-morrow."

"Why not to-morrow as well as any day? The sooner the business is over the better. I repeat, it will be inconvenient. I have an appointment at the Horse-Guards, and ought to be, besides, at a hundred other places. I have no time to waste on idle visits just now."

"The best thing will be not to make it an idle one, then, Onslow."

Onslow coloured, and bit his lip. "Amuse yourself as you like, De Beauvoir: you have a right to do so. How often must I protest to you that my love has worn itself out, and that I might as well try to forget the changes that have come upon me, believing myself the credulous fool I was some fourteen years ago, as to call it back again. It is not possible."

"People say so many things are not possible that turn out just the reverse, that you must pardon me for having my own ideas on the subject. However, as you seem not over and above inclined to any discussion of your own affairs at present, I will speak about your ward's instead. Her mother certainly means her to marry Sir Francis Leslie."

"Her mother, my dear De Beauvoir, cannot mean any such thing, as Sir Francis is going to be married to another lady."

"Indeed! Is your information authentic?"

"From head-quarters, upon my honour. Mr. Cavendish told me himself, or rather wrote to me, that Sir Francis was to marry his daughter."

"Pray may I ask," said De Beauvoir, gravely, "as you have had more experience in these things than I have, whether it is usual to be in love with two persons at the same time?"

This was an unlucky question, for Onslow had never forgotten the affair of

Captain Dallas; and he replied with equal gravity, none of which, however, was assumed, "I really do not understand you."

"Well, then, Sir Francis Leslie is amazingly struck with Henrietta Cavendish. I can see it; for I know all the symptoms of this dangerous malady. Besides, he inscribes verses to her, and you can see he had taken a new pen to write them with. What a pity that fine things like these should be written with a goose's quill! And how many of them are as hollow as the unconscious quill itself!"

"Come," said Onslow, "this is no laughing matter."

"I perfectly agree with you," said De Beauvoir.

"I mean it is no laughing matter, because Sir Francis has no right to be in love with Henrietta, nor Henrietta with him. It is just like Mrs. Cavendish; but I shall have the rein in my hand, in this case at least, and she shall feel that I have power to prevent her daughter from

doing wrong, however I might have failed in regard to herself."

This was said with great bitterness, and it satisfied De Beauvoir that, like most men, Onslow did not trust the whole secret of his soul with his friend.

The interview between Colonel Onslow and Mrs. Cavendish took place, as he had said it should, on the morrow. He had congratulated himself that he had seen her first at a public place, and he had determined to feel perfectly at ease: he entered her presence, nevertheless, with evident embarrassment, and with a host of recollections crowding on his mind. Such had been her sensations at the theatre; but she had felt that their indulgence would interfere with the accomplishment of the object she had in view; and when a woman's whole soul is bent on the attainment of one point, it were hard if she did not find self-possession enough to enable her to attain it. She saw that Onslow was altered from what he was; and she knew that to conquer him a

second time would be far more difficult than it had been at first. She perceived that it was necessary he should not know the danger he was incurring, — that she must treat him as a familiar friend. She only asked that opportunity for easy and frequent intercourse might be afforded, and she felt certain of the rest.

Colonel Onslow was astonished at her cheerful frankness. "She has ceased to love me," said he to himself; "and it was time she should do so."

As he looked up, he perceived her hand, delicate and beautiful as ever, resting on the leaves of a poem which was lying before her, and on one of its fingers he beheld an emerald ring, which he had given her in those days of happy confidence which he had imagined were leading them on to marriage. He was surprised, and agreeably so. She saw that he had recognized the ring: it was enough, — and she talked of Henrietta.

"What is this story I hear, Mrs. Cavendish," said Onslow, interrupting her,

at length, "about Henrietta and Sir Francis Leslie? Lord De Beauvoir tells me the gentleman is making love: this cannot, or this ought not to be; and you know why it cannot, and it ought not!"

"Really, Major Onslow—pardon me, I cannot help calling you Major Onslow, it is more familiar to me—really I know nothing about Sir Francis being in love with Henrietta. Of course, it is a thing out of the question."

"Then why did you let either of them run the risk of forming such an attachment? Mr. Cavendish comes to town to-morrow, and in three or four days after he sets off for Yorkshire to bring his daughter home. Does Sir Francis know this?"

"Yes, I think so; but I am not quite sure."

"Let him take care. If Mr. Cavendish suspects for an instant that he has been flirting, or whatever it may be the fashion to call it, with Henrietta; or if

his daughter should suspect it, who, from all accounts, is as high-spirited as her father, he is ruined with them for ever."

"It would be very hard if the happiness of any man or woman either was to be ruined on such slight grounds."

"Has it never happened?" asked Colonel Onslow, in a tone somewhat lower than he had used before.

Mrs. Cavendish looked down, and was silent.

"But I do not know," said she, suddenly, "how Mr. Cavendish is to hear any thing on the subject, unless from you, Colonel Onslow. Besides, as I said before, there is nothing to tell. Sir Francis has never made love to Henrietta. And as to Henrietta ——"

"Well! and what as to Henrietta?"

"Why, simply this, that if I had conceived her to be under any danger in this case, I should not have permitted, that is to say, encouraged his visits here. But Henrietta never could dream of such a thing, because she has known from her

childhood that Sir Francis would, in all probability, marry her cousin Amelia; and because she would never nourish a feeling of such a nature without letting me trace it as it rose."

"Are you quite sure of that, Mrs. Cavendish?

"Yes, I am quite sure; for I know her gentle, her delicate, her trusting nature, her love for me."

"I am happy to hear such high praise of Henrietta, of my ward. I shall have no trouble with her, I find: I shall not be obliged to exert my authority — that would not be pleasant, would it?"

He asked this question gravely enough, and Mrs. Cavendish saw that he was serious. She felt mortified, and somewhat indignant that Colonel Onslow should renounce the shadow of a claim over herself, and yet at the same time declare his resolution of enforcing those he had over her daughter.

"It is not likely," said she, "that we shall disagree on that subject, nor indeed on any other that I know of."

"It is not likely, perhaps, but it is possible. I must see Henrietta."

"You shall see her immediately. It is five o'clock. You cannot think of going away till the evening."

"I was thinking of it, certainly," said Onslow.

"Then you shall think of it no longer. I will order your horse to be led to the stable.—Ah! what a beautiful creature! but not so handsome as the grey you used to ride when you were in the habit of coming here formerly."

Colonel Onslow was more astonished at this remark, and the manner in which it was uttered, than at any thing he had heard or seen in the course of his visit. He looked at Mrs. Cavendish, for a moment or two, with an expression that confused her; and certainly the sight of her confusion did not displease him.

He stayed to dinner, and he had no idea that the evening would have been made so agreeable: it was the pleasantest he had passed for months, perhaps for years,

and he conversed almost as he had been accustomed to converse in other days. When he bade Mrs. Cavendish good night, her hand was retained voluntarily in his as long as it had been passively retained a few evenings before. He talked of calling soon again. "O do!" said Henrietta eagerly; "tell Colonel Onslow he must, mamma."

"I have no occasion to tell him so, my love; he knows that whenever he is happy to come, I am happy to see him."

Onslow bowed, smiled, and departed.

CHAP. VI.

"None better knows than you
How I have ever loved the life removed,
And held in idle price to haunt assemblies,
Where youth, and cost, and witless bravery keeps."

Measure for Measure

The post of the next morning brought to Mrs. Cavendish a letter from her uncle, Mr. Stanhope. It was couched in the following words:—

Grassdale, Northumberland,
Nov. 10.

"My dear Niece,—I am but a bad correspondent, as, indeed, I need not tell you, seeing that I only write to you once in a twelvemonth, and not always then. I wrote to you last July; and therefore I could not have had the resolution to have begun another letter so soon—this being the tenth of November—if I had

not a great, a very great favour to ask of you. You see, my dear niece, I tell you at once why I write; for I have not lived in your courtly London, nor its vicinity, and I think it always best to speak openly when it does not hurt people's feelings to do so; and I hope I shall not hurt your feelings in this case: — certainly not, if you are like what your poor father was.

"My dear niece, I am now just sixty-four years old — not very old, you will say; at least, not old enough to complain of much infirmity. I have always led a temperate, and, I trust, an honourable life, and I have been happy, as far as one can be happy in this world. But for these last three months my health has been declining. I have consulted the village apothecary, and he is an honest one, for he has told me I should seek advice in London. I told him I could not go to London, that I could not bear the noise of its streets, and the confusion

of its hotels. He asked me if I had no friends in its neighbourhood, no relations. Then I thought of you, and I said to him I would see about it. Can you, will you receive me, then? Say so at once, if you cannot. I will give you no trouble, Constantia; I am a very quiet sort of person, and I will not inconvenience you long. I wish to bring with me my own man, and my favourite spaniel. Pray write soon. If not perfectly convenient, I will make other arrangements. I beg my best love to my grand niece, and am

"Your affectionate uncle,

"J. W. STANHOPE."

"Henrietta," said Mrs. Cavendish, when she had finished the perusal of this letter, "we are going to have a visit from your uncle, Mr. Stanhope. You must do every thing you can to please him. He is an excellent man—peculiar in his ideas and in his manners—but good-natured in the extreme."

"Oh! I am so glad! And when will he come, mamma?"

"I shall write, and beg him to come as soon as possible. I quite long to see him; I have heard so much of him."

A frank and friendly answer was accordingly despatched to Mr. Stanhope, and in reply he sent word that he might shortly be expected.

Ere he arrived, however — for travelling was no easy thing with him — there was time for Colonel Onslow to pay three or four visits, which were undoubtedly rather long ones than otherwise. By imperceptible gradations his reserve of manner wore away, and there was, at times, a sort of repressed triumph in his air, which contrasted remarkably with his general gravity. In whatever feeling of the heart this triumph had its source, it was intoxicating in its influence, and dangerous in its effects. Onslow felt himself led on; but the consciousness did not make him stop.

Lord De Beauvoir had called at Wimbledon also; and in one of these visits he had been again accompanied by Colonel St. Helier.

Mrs. Cavendish had informed Lord De Beauvoir of the intended visit of her uncle. The intelligence gratified him; for Mr. Stanhope had been the intimate friend of his father, and was highly esteemed by himself.

Just at this time Mrs. Cavendish lost sight of Sir Francis Leslie. She mentioned the circumstance to Colonel Onslow, who had been introduced to him at her house.

Colonel Onslow had some curiosity to ascertain what cause there might be for this secession; but he met him nowhere in town, nor could he hear any thing of him.

The invalid from Northumberland made his appearance at last; and it so happened that Mrs. Cavendish and her daughter were alone on the day of his

arrival. He was received as he had expected and hoped; and the tears stood in his eyes as he was led across the elegant little hall by his niece. "Let me sit down, Constantia, — I cannot speak just now; let me sit down."

Henrietta bounded forward, and opened the door of the breakfast room. "This way, this way!"

"This way, indeed, my pretty darling! Oh! what a sweet nurse you will be! and yet I am not as bad as all that either. I mean to walk round your garden, and help you to feed your canary birds. Why they are singing as if to welcome me!"

"Every thing in this house welcomes you, my dear uncle," said Mrs. Cavendish. "Believe me, I am delighted to see you, and I have an old acquaintance to introduce to you too—so you will feel quite at home; and I know what a regard you have for Lord De Beauvoir."

"Regard, indeed!" said Mr. Stan-

hope, his eye lighting up instantly. "Were all our young nobility like him, they would be nobles as well in nature as in name. I could forget myself young in his praise. Ay, I knew he was in London. The last time I saw him was when he visited Northumberland, on his return from the Ionian Islands; and he was the same then as ever. He has held governments, Constantia; but none of their chicaneries and double policy have come round his heart. He was a little king in Jamaica—a prince in the Ionian Islands—a patriot and a hero—and a kind man every where. It was when he held that same government of Jamaica that he turned scholar also; one would have thought he would have had something else to do; and then that horrible and enervating climate!—I have heard men tell of it—I thank heaven, I never saw it, nor any place like it. Well, but the climate was nothing to him. I am gossiping sadly, my dear niece: do I tire you?"

"Oh! go on, go on!" cried Henrietta, taking hold of his hand playfully.

"Very well, then, I will. Shall I tell you how Lord De Beauvoir passed the day in Jamaica? He used to rise at five, and then he rode out till between six and seven. My dear child, you should see him ride, indeed you should, he looks so well on horseback. Well, then, when he came in, he read or he wrote till breakfast time. Then there were councils and introductions, and all those wise and fine things afterwards. He wrote all his official letters of any consequence himself; they were not even copied by his secretaries, for he liked some things not to be known till they were actually done. At four he dined; they keep better hours abroad, Constantia. He never sat above an hour at table, so he had two hours before him till evening; and these were passed in his private apartments. At seven he rode out again. How often has he described to me the refreshing rides he used

to take with Colonel Onslow along the eternal sea beach, as he called it! At nine there was a supper, or something of that kind, laid out at the government-house; but he seldom made his appearance at it. No doubt, however, his secretaries and his aides-de-camp were the better for it."

"Oh! for shame!" cried Mrs. Cavendish. "What concealed satire!"

"I did not mean it, Constantia: I assure you I did not. It would be a fine thing for me to set up for a satirist,—I who observe nothing! Lord De Beauvoir tells me I lose a great deal of amusement by not watching the movements of other people. Now what good would that do? None at all, I am sure; and one ought not to interfere with other people, you know. But will you have the kindness to let Stevens be sent for? I must rest a little before dinner, if you please."

"Most assuredly;" and Mrs. Cavendish desired Henrietta to ring the bell.

An order for his attendance having been sent to Mr. Stanhope's man, Stevens shortly made his bow at the door. He was a stout, placid-looking person, about the same age as his master; but there was a quiet half-concealed shrewdness in his eye, which showed that he had a greater talent for observation than Mr. Stanhope had laid claim to himself.

Mrs. Cavendish felt much pleased with her uncle; and she expressed this opinion to her daughter, during the short *tête-à-tête* which they now had together.

"O I love him already!" cried Henrietta. How glad Lord De Beauvoir will be to see him! Do you think he will call to-morrow? You know we told him we expected my uncle to-day."

"True, my dear Henrietta; but Lord De Beauvoir is much engaged, and I am afraid we shall not see a great deal of him now; and he spends the Christmas in Northumberland."

"Yes; but he will come to London again in the spring: he said he should;

and then, you know, we shall be in town too; and we shall see him very often, I hope."

"You like Lord De Beauvoir very much, Henrietta?"

"Oh yes, very much, mamma! He is so gentlemanly, so entertaining, so clever! and those who know him well speak of him so highly! He is so different from the few men I have seen—so superior!"

"Do you think him superior to Sir Francis Leslie?"

"Mamma, why do you ask me that question? You know I should be very foolish if I did not think so."

"My love, I was not aware you were such a judge of character: but you do not dislike Sir Francis?"

"Dislike him? Oh not at all! I like him very much; and I feel more at ease with him than with Lord De Beauvoir, because I have known him for so many years."

"And what do you think of Colonel St. Helier, Lord De Beauvoir's friend?"

"Oh I know he must be clever, or agreeable, or estimable, because they are so intimate; but indeed I cannot discover it myself. If I could, I dare say I should like him better. Is he proud, mamma? He looks as if he were proud. I am afraid of proud men. Then when he looks at me, he seems as if he had a dread of speaking; and I should pity him, only I know he would not like to be pitied."

Mrs. Cavendish laughed; but Henrietta was quite serious, and repeated what she had said.

Mr. Stanhope, during dinner, and afterwards, could scarcely take his eyes from Henrietta. She was just the being to please him; and he made a secret vow, in the affectionate enthusiasm of his heart, that she should be his adopted child,—his heiress.

Sir Francis Leslie, the next morning, arrived at Wimbledon. He had not been

there for some time; and Mrs. Cavendish playfully reproached him for the neglect with which he had treated them. He endeavoured to make his apology in a similar tone; but it was evident that the effort was a painful one, and the anxious curiosity of Mrs. Cavendish was excited. Politeness, however, and kind feeling, forbade her dwelling on the subject, and she touched on a variety of topics, in the hope that some of them might be agreeable to Sir Francis. Amongst others, she alluded to the expected arrival of Amelia Cavendish. Scarcely any man could have received the congratulations which she archly offered him more ungracefully: he hesitated, and his colour changed; then he talked of not having been well, of having been out of spirits, &c. He told Mrs. Cavendish, with a forced smile, that he had come to Wimbledon with the idea that it might rouse him, and he asked for Henrietta. Henrietta, at this

moment, entered the room, accompanied by Mr. Stanhope, whom she had been leading round the garden. The old gentleman drew back at the sight of a stranger, but Mrs. Cavendish insisted on his remaining with them. He was pleased with the appearance of Sir Francis; and though he declined taking any active share in the conversation, he seemed amused and interested in what was passing around him. "That poor young man does not look well," said he, in a whisper to Mrs. Cavendish. "Now, when I was as young as he was, I should not have had time to think of illness, while talking to such a sweet creature as your Henrietta."

"Stevens," said Mr. Stanhope to his attendant, when he was undressing him at night, and with whom, to own the truth, his most familiar communications were held, — "you saw Sir Francis Leslie, when you were standing behind my chair at dinner: — what do you think of him?"

"A quiet, well-behaved young gentleman enough, sir," said Stevens, with all proper modulation of tone. "An admirer, I presume, if I am not too bold in saying so, of the young lady's?"

"Eh, Stevens?" said Mr. Stanhope, turning round suddenly.

"A lover of Miss Henrietta's, sir, that was all I said."

"A lover of Miss Henrietta! Why, Stevens, she is quite a child."

"May be so, sir; but that is no rule now-a-days."

"Poor Henrietta! and is she so soon to become acquainted with love and all its sorrows? — O Stevens, Stevens! when I was a young man, — but I forget myself — I was talking of Henrietta. She ought to have a good husband — a kind one — a very kind one; — yes, that she ought."

"Certainly, sir, and I dare say this young gentleman will be good and kind too."

"Yes; but he is so young, Stevens! A man of Lord De Beauvoir's age would do better. He would take more care of her."

"Take care of her, sir!" repeated Stevens, suppressing a smile.

"To be sure;—is she not quite a child? Lord De Beauvoir would do much better—I am certain he would."

"Perhaps, sir, if you were to give his lordship a quiet hint,—for he would never think of such a thing of himself."

"How? What?" said Mr. Stanhope, hurriedly.

"Dear me, sir, I was only jesting; but Sir Francis is, as you say, very young; and he has an unsettled look about him—a something in his eye, in his manner. He is not happy, sir, take my word for it."

"Not happy! Then it would be very wrong in him to marry Henrietta, to make her unhappy too."

"Most undoubtedly, sir; but it is difficult to convince young ladies that

they can be any thing but happy when they are going to be married."

"But Henrietta is not like other young ladies. I should like to talk to her a little, only they would think me impertinent. Poor darling!—I must turn the matter over in my mind."

Shortly afterwards Stevens was desired to retire.

CHAP. VII.

" Ah! love was never yet without
The pang, the agony, the doubt!
* * * * * * *
My light of life! Ah! tell me why
That pouting lip and alter'd eye?"

LORD BYRON

EXPEDITION and activity were just now the order of the day at Mr. Cavendish's residence in Hill Street, and Harry Cavendish longed for the arrival of his father and his sister, not only because he was anxious to see the latter after an absence so long as hers had been, but because he thought their appearance would introduce order into confusion, and harmony every where. He was a studious and contemplative young man. What might be the particular objects of his contemplation at this time, his father, had he been present, would scarcely have felt any anxiety to ascertain; for he considered him as one

who lived in the world of dreams, and he thought it better to let him wake from them of his own accord. Perhaps Mr. Cavendish, influenced as he was himself by an enthusiasm as active as it was lofty, might not have acquiesced thus passively in the habits and disposition of his eldest son, had he not, in the vivid imagination, the genius, and the taste of his youngest son and of his daughter, found promise for his hope, and food for his ambition. He saw that Henry would wear his patrimonial honours when, in the course of time, they should descend to him, gracefully and with propriety. He had, undoubtedly, no inclination for the active walks of life, and perhaps, were he compelled to tread them, he would pass through them listlessly, and reach their termination without having gathered any thing on the way to serve either for a memorial or a trophy. George, on the contrary, had his fortune to make; and though yet a boy, he showed evidently that he would compel the world to give

him its admiration, its confidence, its honours. For him, therefore, Mr. Cavendish determined to reserve the full value of his influence — for him only favours should be requested, patronage solicited, exertions made. That Mr. Cavendish loved his younger better than he did his elder son might possibly be true; that is to say, his love for the one was passive, for the other active — still he had the real happiness of his heir at heart; and it was certainly true that his daughter was the dearest to him of all his children — not only on account of her talents, her affection, and her beauty; but because from her sex there was a charm thrown around her which fathers only feel, but which fathers, perhaps, could not explain. She was to him the image of all that was pure, graceful, delicate, affectionate; and so deep was the tone of this devoted paternal feeling, that even when he had liked Sir Francis Leslie best, the idea continually glanced across his mind that he was not strictly worthy to be the hus-

band of his daughter. Yet he continued anxious for the marriage, because it had become a matter of habit with him: besides, it was a thing that had been talked of, and it is awkward to have talked of a marriage when the event does not tally with the anticipation. The heart of his child, too — was that a trifle? — and he knew what was the decision of her heart. Ambition might have looked higher; but it was rather late in the day to consider this now. When Mr. Cavendish went down to Yorkshire, it was his determination that the marriage should take place in the spring, and this was a determination he did not think it necessary to keep secret from Amelia — more especially as it had been an affair fully discussed and partly arranged between Sir Francis and himself. He tenderly and anxiously unfolded his plans to her in the course of their long journey to the metropolis. Amelia knew not how it was that while listening to the details of these arrangements, a feeling undefined, but certainly

the very reverse of inspiriting, pressed upon her heart. She thought that she had not recovered from the impression given to her mind by the parting with her aunt; or it might be that the idea of leaving her father's roof cast a melancholy tinge over her reflections. It was strange, for she was fondly and devotedly attached to Sir Francis. She loved him with passion, and those who love with passion may indeed have cause to look back with bitterness; but how seldom, in the hey-day of its youth and its success, have they time to look forward with any thing but joy!

They arrived in Hill Street. Their stay there was to be a short one at present; yet it promised all the delight, all the repose of home; and Amelia's heart grew lighter as she entered the cheerful hall. Her brother Henry embraced her tenderly, and hurried with her to the drawing-room. "I saw Leslie yesterday," said he softly and archly at the same time. "No doubt he will be with us ere we

have dined. I told him I thought you would come to-day, but that I could not say so positively; for it struck me you might have gone a little out of your way to call on the Douglas's. My father talked of something of that sort when he set off; but I suppose he altered his plans. Ah! how well you look, Amelia!"

"Well, but tell me how Frank is looking?"

"To own the truth, not very well."

"Have you seen much of him?"

"Why, I only came up from Devonshire a week ago. I have seen him twice, I think. You will find him thinner — I am certain you will, Amelia."

"Thinner! has he been ill? And his spirits ——"

"They will be better, no doubt, now you are arrived; — but here comes my father."

"Amelia, my love," said Mr. Cavendish, "you are tired; you had better take off your shawl at once. Never mind your dress: the best thing we can do is

to sit down to dinner as soon as possible, and tell Henry all that we have seen on the road, and all that we have talked of, too, if it pleases you to do so."

"We will see about that," said Amelia, rallying: "I will be with you again directly."

They went down to dinner. Amelia, fatigued in body and somewhat anxious in mind, ate little. A light second course had just been placed on the table, when a knock was heard at the door. "Ah! there is Leslie—" cried Mr. Cavendish.

Amelia's cheek instantly assumed the glow of happy expectation. Henry smiled.

The door was opened, and the sound of steps echoed in the hall; but they passed the door of the dining-room, and were heard ascending the staircase.

"It can scarcely be Sir Francis," said Mr. Cavendish; "and yet, who else can have called at such an hour?"

Amelia said nothing. At length the servant who had admitted the visitor

made his appearance, and handed a card to Amelia. "Captain Bennet!" she exclaimed in a tone of mingled vexation and surprise —"Captain Bennet!"

"Captain Bennet!" echoed Mr. Cavendish. "The gentleman who, you wrote me word, was always at Mrs. Mortimer's! Very extraordinary!"

"Extraordinary indeed!" said Amelia. "Pray," turning to the servant, "how could you admit any visitor at such an hour?"

"He asked, Ma'am, first, whether you had arrived, and I answered yes; and then he hesitated—and I said you were at dinner; but by that time he had got half way through the hall, and he said he was anxious to hear how you were after your journey, Ma'am; and so I begged him to walk up stairs."

"What is to be done, Amelia?" said Mr. Cavendish.

"Papa, pray go to him I had rather not go myself—I had rather not, indeed."

"But Captain Bennet will not thank

me for that, Amelia. His visit is to you. You had better come with me, my darling; or suppose—if we might venture to treat him with so little ceremony—that we requested the pleasure of his company here."

"Oh, as for ceremony, there is no occasion to think of it in this instance. *He* does not appear to have done so; so pray do just as you like, my dear papa;" and Amelia played with a jelly that was on her plate, as if not knowing what else to do.

Mr. Cavendish watched the changing colour of her cheek, the compression of the lip, the languor of the eye. He was at a loss perfectly to account for these. True, she might be disappointed at not seeing Sir Francis, and she might not wish to see Captain Bennet; but why was she to be agitated so? The fact was, Amelia felt that she was going to receive intelligence of Sir Francis; and she felt, also, that it must be intelligence that

could not be satisfactory, since it must necessarily be connected with the subject of his absence; and ought he to be absent at a time like this? The visit of Captain Bennet appeared to her as unpropitious as it was *mal-à-propos*. To her father it only seemed the last: besides, she felt offended that Sir Francis should have authorised the visit of a man who was peculiarly disagreeable to her; and that he should have made him, as it were, the confident of the intimacy which subsisted between them. All these ideas and suspicions—for, after all, what were they but suspicions—passed rapidly through her mind, ere Captain Bennet entered the dining-room. He advanced towards her with somewhat more alacrity than he had been accustomed to meet her with in Yorkshire; but she rose slowly, and stopped his approach to herself by introducing him to her father.

Mr. Cavendish felt it necessary to give a tone to the conversation: in an

instant Captain Bennet was himself again. He talked of the weather, and of the fatigue of travelling, and was going on to something else, when, checking himself, he said, "But I should offer my apologies for intruding on you as I have done. Indeed, Miss Cavendish, you must forgive me; but Sir Francis Leslie, with whom I took an early dinner to-day at Long's, appeared so extremely anxious to learn whether you and Mr. Cavendish had arrived from Yorkshire, that I determined, not saying a word to him, you must know, to make the enquiry myself."

"And pray where is Sir Francis?" asked Mr. Cavendish, his brow contracting suddenly. "What may be his engagements?"

"You may depend upon it, Mr. Cavendish, engagements that he would break from most willingly, if he could possibly do so, for the pleasure of calling here; but these things cannot always be done when we wish it: and as I suspected, and in fact was well aware, that

Sir Francis stood in this predicament now, in compassion to his anxieties I resolved to bring him good news, if possible."

"He cannot be dining out," said Mr. Cavendish, incautiously: he was vexed with himself the next moment for having said so, for he saw that Amelia was far from being at ease. "But to be sure," added he, "there are a thousand other engagements, as you observe, Captain Bennet, which a gentleman must keep; and all I hope is, we shall see him to-morrow."

Amelia continued silent: she saw she had been wrong in supposing Captain Bennet to have come regularly commissioned from Sir Francis; but she had now all the anxiety of uncertainty to endure, as to what could detain the latter from her — and she was hurt at the delay. It was evident that Captain Bennet shunned the subject, and that he rattled on from one topic to another with the determination to be fluent on all but that. She wished most sincerely that

Captain Bennet had not made good his entrance: it would have been better to have heard nothing, than the little he had told them. But Captain Bennet had been anxious to introduce himself in Hill-Street: he had a sort of suspicion that Sir Francis would not befriend him on the occasion, and he had thought also he might never have so fair an excuse for calling as he had this evening.

Time past on — the visitor looked at his watch. "I beg pardon, Mr. Cavendish, I must run away — I am five minutes too late already. Good evening, good evening, Miss Cavendish. By the by, Montague is in town, — I saw him yesterday. Only think what a lucky fellow he is: his uncle, old Hotham, took it into his head to die last week, and left him every thing; — a clear seven thousand a year, Miss Cavendish, not an acre mortgaged — a spacious mansion, as the auctioneers have it, in Hertfordshire — old trees, hunters, hounds, every thing

that man can desire. I wish Montague joy of his good fortune from the bottom of my soul. As gentlemanly a fellow as ever breathed, isn't he, Miss Cavendish?"

"Most certainly," said Amelia; "and I am happy to hear of his good fortune: he has every right to enjoy it. I believe the old gentleman was neither liberal nor kind to him in his lifetime, yet Captain Montague always spoke of him with candour and forbearance. Few young men placed like him would have done the same."

"How old do you take him to be, Miss Cavendish?"

"Really, I never thought much about his age: I suppose he may be about six and twenty."

"Rather older, I suspect; however that scarcely signifies: a man's looks are of more importance than his years."

"And his principles of more importance than either," said Mr. Cavendish. "I like Amelia's account of Captain

Montague; perhaps we shall see him. You knew him very well, my love, did you not in Yorkshire?"

"Well, certainly, for the shortness of our acquaintance; but he was a man, whom knowing, one would soon know intimately. His conversation is sensible —his manners are fashionable and pleasing—he is clever, gentlemanly, and entertaining."

"Hem!" said Captain Bennet; "but I must positively be gone. Once again, I have the pleasure of wishing you a very good evening."

"Perhaps at another time—" Mr. Cavendish began, for courtesy required something at parting.

"It will give me the greatest pleasure, Mr. Cavendish, I assure you. I am extremely obliged to you—good evening." And at length the parlour door was closed on Captain Bennet.

There was a dead silence for a few moments after his departure. "Captain Bennet," said Mr. Cavendish, looking up

at last with an air of gaiety, "must have passed over the description of Harpocrates when he was taking his school lessons in mythology: he could never have had patience to read of a god who kept his finger on his lip — he would have bitten his own with vexation."

"I saw that Mr. Hotham's death in the paper last Saturday," said Henry. "It was in the Courier; but it could not have reached Yorkshire when you left it."

"I should not think Captain Montague would leave the army," Amelia remarked. "He is devoted to his profession. It would be a pity, would it not, to give it up, now that he will be enabled to pass so pleasantly through its different grades, up to the very highest? Ah! what a fine opening for his ambition! When once fortune begins to smile, it seems as if she determined to smile always. Is it not the case, papa? It is like Aladdin walking through his garden of jewels — the light cast by the

first he has gathered shows him where he may gather more."

"Amelia, I am glad to hear you talk like yourself again. Come, you must forgive your truant this once: he will be here to-morrow, and then we shall have explanations, and apologies, and entreaties. A few looks, half angry, half happy — smiles, thanks, and reconciliation."

"Indeed, papa, this is not fair of you. Why should I be vexed with Sir Francis? Certainly, I should have liked better to have seen him to-night, and you would not believe me if I said the contrary. Would he, Harry? But then, you know, if he has an engagement. — Ah, papa," added she blushing, and throwing her arms round his neck, "no one, at least, shall be angry with him but myself — promise me that."

"I promise you every thing, my darling; and now let us order lights and coffee to the drawing-room. Go you and Harry and talk over these important

affairs, if you like, for five or ten minutes, together. Order Burton to bring me my *portfeuille*. I am too idle to move. I must write one or two letters to Downing-Street; and when they are signed, sealed, and directed, I will join you, and we will have a game of chess or piquet, as you like best."

When Mr. Cavendish was left in solitude, he felt that there had been something to impair the quiet happiness of his arrival at his home. Aware of what had been the former habits of Sir Francis, a suspicion crossed his mind that all was not right at present. Captain Bennet was evidently a man who would tell in general whatever he might have to tell, yet he had not afforded them any information as to what, on that particular evening, might be the precise engagement of Sir Francis. Mr. Cavendish leant his brow upon his hand in perplexed and anxious thought. His beautiful, his beloved, his idol, was she to be taken from the sanctuary where paternal love

watched over her, to be the plaything of a vacillating boy, and perhaps neglected afterwards? — The servant entered with his letter-case; but his letters could not be written yet — he continued his train of thought. If Sir Francis should, indeed, be found to have forgotten what was owing to the honourable hopes that had been held out to him — if the pernicious excitement of the gaming-table should have made him its thrall once more, those honourable hopes should be allowed him no longer — Amelia herself should command him to forget the past. The parental love of Mr. Cavendish found an ally in his pride — his daughter might match with the noblest of the land. She had connection, fortune, beauty, talent — she had been courted by wits — she had been admired by statesmen. The treasure of her love had been given, indeed: was it possible it had not contained a charm to bind even the indecision of youth in submission to its altar?

Again Mr. Cavendish sighed. The

world would have been astonished if it had caught the echo of the sigh, for he stood on the pinnacle of good fortune. From youth her golden gifts had been showered on him: every circumstance had combined to make him honourable and honoured. His paternal property brought him in three thousand a year — the fortune of his wife, the result of his past professional exertions — for he had long since turned his back on the bar — the legacies of relations, gave to his income about as many thousands more. Highly gifted as he was, and delighting in the stirring activity of political life, he was hailed as a welcome colleague by those who were engaged in the loftiest of human employments, that of directing the energies of a great nation, and influencing the destinies of mankind. The remuneration he received from his country was spent in acts of munificence and charity. Celebrated as a political orator, dreaded as an antagonist, and regarded with an admiration which, while it vener-

ated his talents, idolised his virtues, he passed through the applauses of the world, tasting, indeed, the luxury of praise, but feeling how much sweeter it was to have deserved it.

His property in Devonshire, Fountain Court, had received considerable improvements since it had come into his possession. When purchased by his father, it had been untenanted for years; and though much was then done both for the house and the grounds, the capabilities the estate possessed were far from being exhausted. The short time it remained in the possession of the Colonel, it continued unaltered; nor was it till Mr. Cavendish began to withdraw his attention from the bar, that he employed the elegance of his taste, in planning for Fountain Court alterations and improvements. The impulse once given, it continued to incite him onwards; and while every ancient oak remained in its original beauty, shrubberies, parterres, hot-houses, lent additional charms to the

garden scenery. Two noble wings had been added to the main edifice; and the interior arrangements of one of these had been carried into effect under the immediate direction and superintendence of Amelia. A portion of every year was now spent at Fountain Court. It was only five miles distant from Castleton; and the good old baronet was frequently induced to extend his drives in that direction, for the purpose of tracing the improvements in his nephew's park, and making his comments on them.

"Ah!" he used sometimes to say to Mrs. Fitzgerald, "George will make Fountain Court so fine a place that he will not live at Castleton when I am dead and gone; and yet I don't think that either, for he has high family feeling about him, and there must be recollections linked with Castleton that he will not find at Fountain Court."

Mr. Cavendish, on the evening that has been recorded, had no leisure to think either of the one or the other. He dis-

missed, as soon as he could, the suspicions that had intruded on his mind, and then wrote his letters. The occupation of writing was of service to him; and he was fully competent, at its conclusion, to encounter his daughter at piquet.

CHAP. VIII.

"I cannot sit, nor rest in mind, nor think."

CROLY'S *Catalne.*

"You'll pardon me a little freedom,
For I must boldly urge in such a cause
* * * * * *
He has stung me to the heart
* * * * * *
I can no more dissemble."

Theodosius

HOUR after hour passed on the following morning, and still Sir Francis Leslie did not call in Hill-Street. Mr. Cavendish, occupied in perusing and in writing letters, had not time to count the hours; but Amelia kept the reckoning faithfully, —and although she turned over the pages of a book, there was little of what it contained that she remembered, when occasionally, as anxious and harassing thoughts asserted their mastery, she laid it down.

Her brother was engaged in drawing a plan in fortification, but he frequently rose from his employment, and lounged to the window. He was surprised at the continued absence of Sir Francis: he saw that his sister was uneasy and restless, and he wished for the termination of her suspense.

But two o'clock struck, and he had not come. "He should have been here ere this," said Henry to himself: "the morning was the fittest time for him to come. He always used to be with us then; and to-day—the very day after her arrival!"

Mr. Cavendish at this moment entered the drawing-room. "My dear love," said he to Amelia, "what say you to a drive to Wimbledon? We ought to go directly, for the days draw in soon now. Come, you shall really go. The fine frosty air will do you good, and bring back the colour to your cheek. Harry, you must come along with us. You must pay your compliments to your cou-

sin. Her face and her heart, boy, are better worth studying than lines of circumvallation, bastions, curtains, and all the formidable array that the engineers love to erect, and the artillery to destroy."

Henry coloured; but Mr. Cavendish turned again to his daughter. "I shall leave orders with Burton regarding any visitors who may call in our absence. I dare say we shall find a guest or two engaged for dinner on our return."

"I shall be very happy to go," said Amelia, with a smile. "I have been something of an idler this morning, and so I feel inclined to be idle still. You know we generally find excuses for continuing in our sins."

"Well, I will order the carriage at once. By the by, I had forgotten Colonel Onslow: he is in town, I know. I wish he may call: I had not half time enough to talk over old stories, when we met, just before I went into Yorkshire. I will make out the list for Burton while

you are putting on your cloak. You would like to see him, Amelia: he is just the man to please you,—a perfect gentleman. I cannot exactly make out how his heart stands at present; but as people frequently do not understand these things themselves, it is no wonder that their friends are puzzled too. Yes, he must dine here, if he calls. Recollect, Harry, he is Henrietta's guardian. He told me, the other day, that he was delighted with her; and that he should watch over her happiness, as if she were a child of his own."

"And for my happiness," said Harry to himself, as he left the room,—"my father appears to put that out of the question. Yet would it not be easy to love Henrietta, if it were necessary?"

Amelia felt glad that the disposal of her afternoon had not been left to herself. She would certainly in that case have staid at home. Still she felt that, by absenting herself for two or three hours from town, she was but doing what it

became her to do, and if Sir Francis were pained at her absence, how fair would be the retaliation! What woman, when feeling or fancying she had been treated with neglect, would not argue as did Amelia?

It was just three when they reached Wimbledon. Henrietta embraced Amelia with affectionate cordiality, and then held out her hand to Henry. She had been accustomed to do this with frankness; but there was a slight alteration in her manner now—an alteration so slight, however, that it was observed by no one but Mr. Cavendish. He looked at her for a moment or two attentively; but, checking the impulse of his secret curiosity, he turned from her, and addressed her mother.

"The weather is dull for the country now, Constantia; but you love the country, and it will always be beautiful to you."

"Yes, undoubtedly," replied Mrs. Cavendish; "but we are unsettled beings at the best, you know; and certainly in the spring I shall go to town."

"Aye, and if you had not made up your mind, I would have compelled you to enter into the circle of our gaieties: it is to be a busy spring with us. I will not talk now of all that is to be done; of dresses that are to be bought, and cheeks that are to borrow beauty from blushes. We have no time, at this moment, to run over even the catalogue of such things; but you shall come and be a looker on. I have no doubt we shall be able to secure the house we were talking of for you from February. And Henrietta, — come here, Henrietta: I suppose you will only be allowed a peep now and then. The mystic curtain is not to be drawn up for a year or two I understand, and then you will see such wonders!"

"Indeed, uncle," said Henrietta, "I am very glad I am to be allowed to be quiet a short time longer. I am sure I shall get tired of concerts, and assemblies, and plays; and then, if I am up late at night, how can I get up early in the morning?—and I do love the morning

air so, my dear uncle! Sometimes it gives me more pleasure to sit at an open window in the morning, looking at the trees and the flowers, than it does to read, or play, or draw, or any thing else."

"Take care, Henrietta, take care. From loving to sit at an open window in the morning, looking at the trees and the flowers, you will love to sit at an open window in the evening, looking at the stars. You are in danger of growing a contemplatist; and do you know what is the next step to that?

"Ah! papa means we shall have you quite sentimental, Henrietta."

"Is there any harm in sentiment?" said Henrietta. "But perhaps I don't exactly understand the sentiment you mean."

"Most probably not, Henrietta. But even if a young lady could stop at sentiment——"

"And why not stop?" asked Henrietta, artlessly.

"Because she finds out that there is something sweeter than sentiment beyond it."

"And what?"—Henrietta began. She stopped, however, suddenly.

Mr. Cavendish smiled. "You will find it out some day or other, Henrietta. Will she not, Amelia?"

The smile, the question, and the blush it called forth, increased the confusion of Henrietta. Her cheek became brighter than Amelia's, and the suffusion lasted longer.

"By the by," said Mr. Cavendish to his sister-in-law, "have you seen Lord De Beauvoir lately? I suspect he is not in town."

"He was here four or five days ago. He goes into Northumberland very soon. I am sorry he is going. We like him very much, do we not, Henrietta?"

"Yes, indeed!" said Henrietta, "every one must love Lord De Beauvoir.—Have you seen him, Amelia?"

"No, not since his return from the Ionian Islands. I am surprised he could leave such a delightful country. Then, too, he had all the enchantments of power around him; and it is so pleasant to command, and to stand elevated above others!"

"My dear Amelia," said Mrs. Cavendish, "if my uncle, Mr. Stanhope, had heard you make that remark, he would have been absolutely alarmed. I must go and draw him from his solitude. I wish you to see him."

Saying this, she left the room, and returned shortly afterwards, accompanied by Mr. Stanhope.

Mr. Cavendish rose hastily, and met him almost at the door.

Pleased at this mark of attention Mr. Stanhope's countenance assumed the benevolent smile which was natural to it; and as his shyness wore off, he manifested a desire to please and receive pleasure from those around him. It was pro-

posed, at length, that, as the sun was shining brightly through the frosted trees, the party should take a few turns in the garden. "Ah!" said Mr. Stanhope, "I wish I had not gone out before; then I might have gone with you now: but the doctors say I must be careful, and I am not young enough to follow their prescriptions, only when they please me. My dear child," added he to Henrietta, "I shall sit at the window till you return, and I dare say you will be kind enough to bring me a rose from the green-house; for Dido has torn the one you gave me yesterday to pieces."

"And I am sure, my dear uncle, if she had not, you should still have had the finest in the green-house to-day. I would not leave you alone now, if it were not for the pleasure of gathering this rose for you."

"Henrietta," said Amelia, "will Mr. Stanhope allow me to stay behind? this room is so delightful, I prefer it to the garden."

"Indeed, you are too kind, Miss Cavendish: I can make no fine speeches, but I feel you honour me very much."

"Well," said Mr. Cavendish, "fine speeches are not to be made in company. Who shall say that Mr. Stanhope will not make them, when he has the full command of the arena?"

The old man smiled, and shook his head.

"I never was an eloquent man, Mr. Cavendish, even in times and in circumstances when young men learn to speak best. I wish to Heaven I had found reason to think that I had been so!" He sighed, and there was a short pause. "I am ashamed," he resumed, hesitatingly, and passing his hand across his brow, "I am ashamed that I have been caught thinking aloud. Ah! my dear niece," whispered he to Mrs. Cavendish, "take your good brother-in-law into the garden now, and you will forget an old man's garrulity by the time you come back again."

She obeyed his hint, and Amelia and he remained sole possessors of the breakfast-room. The former felt certainly inclined to meditate rather than to talk; and she might have found an excuse for doing this in the abstraction of her companion, but she was anxious to pay him the attention which his age and their relative situations at the moment demanded; and she made a remark in praise of Henrietta.

Mr. Stanhope roused himself immediately. "Ah! Miss Cavendish, she is indeed a sweet creature, new to the world and its ways; pure and happy. Really, I have thought sometimes that women might keep these feelings even as life goes on; for they continue under shelter of their home: they do not mingle with the foolish contentions of the learned and the great; they have nothing to do with politics, nor with law, which is as bad as politics, nor ——"

"Oh, sir," said Amelia, gaily, "what would papa say if he were here!"

"Your papa! Ah! what an unfortunate blunderer I am! But I ought not to talk: I always contrive to go headforemost into just such blunders as these. But pardon me, dear Miss Cavendish; I was not thinking of what I said; that is to say, I was thinking and not thinking at the same time. But Henrietta——"

"Why do you sigh, sir, when you name Henrietta?"

"Did I sigh? I did not know that I did so. If I might venture now,—but no,—and yet I should like——"

"Pray, Mr. Stanhope, go on: it is too hard to raise a lady's curiosity, and not to gratify it."

"Curiosity! It is that same curiosity which does such mischief in this gossiping world of ours. But, my dear young lady, I ought not to think of evil words or actions when I am speaking to you. Why should I not say what I was going to say? You love Henrietta—you know all her virtues, and, I dare say, her feel-

ings too — for you have been her chosen friend from childhood. She has told me so, dear Miss Cavendish; and I knew beforehand that the sweet child's judgment must be correct. Would to God it were as correct in other cases; but, poor thing! how is she to know better?"

"Sir!" said Amelia, with a look of astonishment.

"Tell me, I beseech you, my good young lady, what you think of Sir Francis Leslie?"

"Sir Francis Leslie! what I think of Sir Francis Leslie!" and Amelia gazed on him with an air of agitated interest.

Mr. Stanhope, however, did not see the agitation and the interest she betrayed; and taking one of her hands in his, he said, — "I seem very impertinent; but I feel as if she were my daughter, without having a father's right to counsel and protect her. I heard a story last night which distressed me much. If he game ——"

"If who game, sir?" asked Amelia, turning pale.

"Why, Sir Francis — Sir Francis Leslie. But, Miss Cavendish, we must not speak of this thing publicly, it may not be true. God forbid I should interfere with the happiness of any man, as long as there was a chance he might be deserving of happiness. But I would wish her to consider a little——"

"Who is it you would wish should consider, Mr. Stanhope?" and the question was asked in a tone so low and so broken, that, wrapped up as Mr. Stanhope was, in his own reflections, he did not hear it.

"These things," he resumed, "should not be done hastily. Happiness is easily lost, but it is not so easy to call it back again. Is it, Miss Cavendish? — Sir Francis is kind and generous: so they tell me, at least; and if Henrietta loves him, what might not so sweet a creature do with a man who knew her excellence?

But I am not certain that she loves him — Stevens thinks not; and Stevens, I dare say, is right. Now, I think it would be worth while to question her on the subject. But I am an old man, and a simple one, Miss Cavendish; and I should confuse myself as well as her if I were to attempt to do so. It would be very well fitting that you, her cousin, her dear companion from childhood, should ask her to let you look into her heart. It is a sincere, a confiding, an affectionate one. I pray God it may not be taught to be a sorrowful one too."

Had Mr. Stanhope raised his eyes at this moment, unobservant as he was, he must have noticed the painful, though subdued, emotion that was struggling for mastery in the eye, the cheek, the lip of Amelia. —What had she heard? What was she yet to hear? It was impossible she could have misunderstood the honest-hearted relative of her cousin. A feeling of indefinite misery, of intolerable oppression, was on her heart and in her soul.

She felt that she must move across the room, if it were only to obey the agitation into which every nerve was thrown. Suddenly, therefore, she rose from the couch on which she was sitting at Mr. Stanhope's side, and hastening to the window she threw it open: with rapid steps she passed the threshold, and walking backwards and forwards over the snow, she forgot both where she was, and who was standing near her.

Mr. Stanhope had followed her to the window, and gazed at her for some moments in silent surprise. At length he could be silent no longer. "My dear, dear Miss Cavendish, I entreat you, for the love of heaven, to come in; you will catch your death of cold. If I have tired you with my conversation, or if you wish to walk a little, pray go to the garden by the other window where the snow has been swept away."

Amelia stopped, turned, and coloured painfully; and, making a violent effort,

she said, "Indeed Mr. Stanhope, you must think me half mad, and I know I must have appeared very rude; but the room was so close just then, that I could not have staid in it another moment, had the king and all his court been round me. But I am better now." And she hurriedly retraced her steps to the couch.

Every sign of emotion had vanished from her countenance, except that she was somewhat paler than she had been before. She had betrayed herself; and had her companion been any other than Mr. Stanhope, the consciousness of having done so would have come oppressively upon her mind. As it was, she had full leisure to think upon the communications which had distressed her. This was no idle report brought to her by as idle men or women; it was the result of observation, not less cautious than it was paternal, and of an affectionate solicitude.

Surely, if a man so unskilled in the manners of the world had felt full con-

viction on a subject so delicate, there was no room to hesitate — to doubt — to hope. She had been forgotten; and forgotten for another. And she — she had remembered him in society, and in solitude; she had thought of him alike in the country and in town; his idea had linked itself with all her expectations — he had cruelly mortified them all. This might have been enough; but she had heard still more than this, that he had become the character she held most in abhorrence — a gamester; and as the thought came upon her mind, she recollected his absence on the preceding evening, and the cautious reserve of Captain Bennet, and felt a secret and sure conviction that at that moment he was at the gaming-table.

Just as Amelia's reflections had reached this painful climax, from which they would have been abstracted only to run through the same chain of ideas again, the party from the garden made their appearance.

She started; but they had scarcely entered the apartment, when a door on the opposite side of the room being opened, Lord De Beauvoir and Colonel Onslow were announced.

This was a fortunate circumstance for Amelia, and the visitors were welcome ones to more than her.

Anxious as Mr. Cavendish felt to discover the exact terms on which his sister-in-law and Colonel Onslow stood in regard to each other, and occupied as he was in the requisite observations, he had leisure, nevertheless, to remark, that if Henrietta received her guardian with pleasure, she met Lord De Beauvoir with greater still. For Lord De Beauvoir himself, his spirits were gay as usual, and he was not, perhaps, more complaisant to Henrietta than he was to her mother. Mr. Cavendish took an early opportunity of introducing him to his daughter. "You will not remember her, my dear lord: she was but a child when you saw her last."

"Ah! but I have not forgotten her — lead me to her as soon as you please."

The introduction was scarcely required; and it was an animated rather than a long one. Amelia, in the hurry of the meeting and the conversation that ensued, forgot for a while her deep causes of anxiety; and, indeed, it was scarcely possible to be engaged in conversation with Lord De Beauvoir, without feeling the heart as interested as the mind was occupied. Yet on the first pause that ensued, Amelia thought of Sir Francis, and the thought was accompanied by a heavy sigh. Lord De Beauvoir, deeming that she had but little cause for grief, involuntarily smiled. "That was a heavy sigh, Miss Cavendish: am I to keep the recollection of it sacred from the happy mortal who has called it forth?"

"I am perfectly willing to confide it to Your Lordship's keeping," said Amelia: "I do not understand the management of sighs."

"Ah! but I must draw back; for if I

take charge of other people's sighs, I shall have no leisure to attend to my own. There is Onslow, now, he knew them well enough in his day: he ran through them all, from the sigh of doubt to that of despair. For my part, after having tasted the sweet bitter of the former, I should certainly stop before I bathed all my heart in the entire bitter of the last: — one can stop at will, I suppose? — Well, I am going to remove myself for a time from a whole host of dangers in perspective. Upon my honour, now I would remain in spite of presentiments; but we ought not to think only of ourselves. I am expected in Northumberland. I shall disappoint my good tenants if I do not go. And there is something owing, too, to those kind hearts that are beating under higher roofs, and who wish to welcome me back among them. I shall have the Douglases, and some of their friends and my own with me; and we shall shoot, and ride, and

dance, and lead the winter into spring; and spring in return will lead us back to London, and to your fair cousin and to you. She is beautiful; yes, she is beautiful: *Onslow told me so long ago*; but she interests you before you have time to think of her beauty."

"I *did not know*," said Onslow, who had come up to them unperceived, "I did not know so much time was required for such discoveries. A poet tells us he is struck and made captive at the first glance: but then, to be sure, poetry is ornamented fiction. There is Mr. Stanhope, let us appeal to him. We were talking of poetry, sir; do you think we can give an author full credit for what he tells us in poetry?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Mr. Stanhope: "we must believe a man when he writes as if he were in earnest. Why should he write at all about feelings, if he does not feel them? Might he not as well be silent? I am sure I should. There is

Lord Byron's 'Fare thee Well.' What do you call that? Is it not beautiful? Old as I am I have shed tears when I read it; and they were tears that I could not stop to wipe away either. Do you think I should have played the child so, if I thought he meant to deceive me? I saw some verses the other day — let me see, I forget where I saw them. O! I remember now, they were in that dear child's Album: they were written by Sir Francis Leslie, and addressed to her; and I had no doubt in the world that he felt what he wrote."

Mr. Stanhope paused. Amelia's eyes were fixed upon the ground. Colonel Onslow looked at her with a sort of vague compassion. And Lord De Beauvoir, not knowing exactly what to do, crossed the room, and seated himself near Henrietta.

Mr. Cavendish came up to his daughter. "Amelia, you are not looking well: is any thing the matter with you?"

"To own the truth, papa, I do not feel quite well. I am faint and chilly;" and she shrunk back in her chair, wrapping her shawl around her.

"You must have caught cold, my love: you were very well this morning. Why, how is this? Your feet are quite wet!"

"It is nothing, papa, nothing!" said Amelia. "Do not say any thing about it — only let us go home;" and as she took her father's hand the tear started to her eyelid.

Mr. Cavendish perceived the tear, but he would not let his daughter feel that he had done so. "Even so,—then let us drive back to town immediately. I have asked Lord De Beauvoir and Colonel Onslow to dine with us: they will take their leisure as to their return, no doubt. I must have some conversation with Onslow after dinner. Lord De Beauvoir never sits long at table, so the task of entertaining him will devolve upon you."

"I am afraid, papa," returned Amelia in a low tone, "I shall be but an indifferent hostess this evening; but I will do my best. Oh! there is the carriage: now let us begone."

"See, my love, here comes Henrietta with her parting kiss. Why you look like the rose you have been gathering. Where have you caught those fresh tints, Henrietta?"

"O uncle! I don't know, only I have been talking earnestly; and mamma says I have always more colour then. Besides, recollect my race in the garden, and our battle about the roses."

Mr. Cavendish smiled; and, drawing her half upon his knee, whispered in her ear, "Do you talk as earnestly when poor Harry is the listener, Henrietta?"

Lord De Beauvoir observed the whisper, and the subsequent confusion of Henrietta; and more than once did he ask himself afterwards what the whisper and the confusion could mean. Mr. Ca-

vendish kissed Henrietta's cheek, and moved away. "Well, Onslow, I have long arrears in conversation to bring up; but I know it would never do to expect much of your attention here. Come, Amelia,"—and Mr. Cavendish and his son and daughter were soon on the road to London.

CHAP. IX.

"Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh, yet, thyself deceive not,
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not,
Hearts can thus be torn away.

* * * * * * *

All my faults perchance thou knowest;
All my madness none can know;
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Wither — yet with thee they go"

LORD BYRON

IMMEDIATELY after their arrival in Hill-Street, Amelia repaired to her dressing-room, and, locking the door hastily, she threw herself upon the couch, and burst into an agony of tears. With her head buried on her arm — her hair disordered — her shawl twisted across her feet, it would have been difficult to recognize in her the same animated creature, who was

the life of the society in which she moved, — its ornament and its pride.

Bitter, indeed, are those moments in the life of woman, when she feels cause to suspect the faith of him on whom she has lavished the enthusiastic tenderness of her heart. The tears fall in secret: it may be at the very moment when the echo of a gay and careless laugh is ringing in her ear: there is solitude in her chamber, and desolation in her soul. Yet, perhaps, constituted as was the heart of Amelia, the anguish of which she was now the prey was more tolerable in the endurance, than would have been that listless and vacant apathy which succeeds so frequently the tumult of the passions. Given up to the one deep thought which mastered her, time ran on unheeded; nor was she roused from the bitterness of her reflections, till an universal shivering came over her, which reminded her that there are other maladies besides those of the mind. She started up, and moved almost involuntarily to the fire; and as

her eye rested on the little French clock upon the mantel-piece, she perceived that it was near the hour of dinner.

Roused as she was, she could not have borne to remain in her apartment, though her sense of chilliness continuing, she felt that it might be better to do so. She rang the bell for her maid, — her toilette was hastily arranged; and though pale and languid when it was completed, she was graceful as ever.

Before she entered the drawing-room Lord De Beauvoir and Colonel Onslow had arrived. They both advanced to meet her. As Colonel Onslow took the hand she held out to him, he almost started at its coldness. "How is this, Miss Cavendish? You give me a warm reception, but your hand is a cold one, indeed!"

Amelia slightly coloured. Mr. Cavendish hastened towards her. "My love, you are not well — I thought so when you were at Wimbledon; and you have not your shawl with you. Harry,

ring the bell for her shawl. Come here, my darling, sit down on the couch: you will be better, I hope, after dinner."

The shawl was brought, and Lord De Beauvoir placed it around her. "I am ashamed I give Your Lordship so much trouble. It is too bad to play the invalid, when I ought to be thinking of entertaining you and Colonel Onslow."

"Think of nothing, I beseech you, but of shaking off this inconvenient cold. I am quite sorry to see you so indisposed. I suppose this climate will try its icy fingers on me next; I have been so long exempted from its rigours, that it will doubtless take its revenge."

"Like a lady when she has her cavalier in chains again, after a temporary emancipation," said Mr. Cavendish, laughing.

"Aye," added Lord De Beauvoir; "and the relapse there, as in other cases, is worse than the original disease."

"I do not think so," said Onslow, gravely; but with a gravity of which he was evidently unconscious.

Amelia looked at her father; and the look was seen and answered by De Beauvoir. Yet, in spite of all the gay conversation that passed around her, Amelia remembered that she was unhappy; and this recollection, added to her bodily indisposition, left her little able to join in it with ease. She was frequently silent, and she looked anxiously for the announcement of dinner — because it would offer change of place. The restlessness of the unhappy resembles the wandering fire which misleads the traveller — it prompts them to move on — and they discover that they have moved in vain. "The deep saith, it is not in me."

At length the party was fairly seated at the dinner table — the room was heated — and the colour came again on the cheek of Amelia. The flush did not deceive every one who looked on it; but it deceived Mr. Cavendish, because he was farthest from her, and because he was fondly anxious to believe she was herself again. He pressed her to eat, and she en-

deavoured to do so. Colonel Onslow saw how she suffered, and he rejoiced when she had it in her power to retire. As the gentlemen attended her to the door, she called her brother after her. "Come in here, Harry, for a moment," said she, and they entered the library together. "I have something to say to you. Do you know, I have a presentiment that Frank will be here shortly. To be sure, I thought so yesterday evening," she added with a sigh, "and I was deceived. Well, but if he should come, papa is offended with him; I know he is; and it would be unpleasant his going in amongst you all, — don't you think so, Harry?"

"Certainly, my dear Amelia, he would be better pleased to be with you if you will admit him."

"If I will admit him, Henry? what a question! why should I not admit him?" For Amelia, with the sorrowful impression on her mind that she had been forsaken, was doubly anxious that no

other should suspect it — at all events, not just now.

"Well, all shall be as you wish."

"Thank you. Now go back to the dining-room, my dear brother."

Amelia had reached the landing-place, when the knocker was touched with a hand, which, though it hesitated a little, touched it familiarly to her. She saw that this time she was not mistaken; and with a heart beating, and lips trembling, she hastened to the drawing-room. She stood by the fire-place, her ear listening to every sound, but with eye afraid to glance towards the door. It was opened hastily. She knew it was his step, yet she did not turn round. "Amelia!" —but she answered not. He came to her; he took her hand, and he kissed it. Then she raised her eyes, and fixed them on his; and remembering only enough to be sensible that her heart longed for relief, her head dropped on his shoulder, and she burst into tears.

The surprise, the consternation of Sir Francis, may be imagined; for some follies, and even some vices are practised so easily, that he who practises them forgets that they will appear follies and vices to others. Not that Sir Francis had been entirely without his fears; but in the moment of meeting how could he think of them: besides, what, after all, could be known to Amelia?

"My dear, dear Amelia, what a reception! For God's sake what is the matter? You are agitated, you look ill: has any thing happened?

"Has any thing happened, Frank?"

"Amelia, you agitate, you alarm me. Is it your wish to make me miserable, when I thought I should be so happy?"

"My wish to make you miserable! Ah! if you had indeed such an anxious wish to see me, why did you not come yesterday? But I forget myself: you were right to stay away. I ought rather to ask why you come now?"

"Amelia!"

"If I could but have suspected such a thing," said Amelia, as if thinking aloud. "But how could I suspect it? I should have been sinning against every honourable thought had I done so. We had parted so lately, so very lately; and your letters — they were just the same as ever; and how could I distrust your letters?"

"For Heaven's sake, Amelia, tell me at once what you have heard; but do not torture me in this manner."

"If I could believe, Frank, — but no — I must not. There could be no misapprehension on his part, and certainly there was none on mine."

"This is most inexplicable," said Sir Francis, and he gazed on her with a mixture of painful astonishment, tenderness, and anger. "Speak, Amelia, — what am I to understand? for I call Heaven to witness, I comprehend not a syllable of all you have been saying."

"You comprehend nothing? O do not, do not force me to tell you what I have heard: it is unkind, it is cruel. If *my father did but know*, — *but he does* not; and I hope he never will. Yet he must, too; for what could I say? O how I shall suffer when he does."

"Amelia, you are more incoherent than ever. You are trifling with me, Amelia."

"Trifling with you, Frank?" and Amelia's voice faltered, and she drew a long and heavy sigh.

"Hear me, my dearest Amelia; I beseech, I command you to hear me," and he followed her as she moved away.

"Yes, certainly I will hear you," and she seated herself languidly on a couch.

Sir Francis threw himself on his knees beside her; and seizing her hand, he kissed it passionately. "Ah! how you tremble; how pale, how very pale you are. Let me draw the couch nearer the fire. What can I give you? what can I

do for you?" and Sir Francis forgot, for the moment, the reception that had greeted him.

"I have two questions to ask you, Frank:—will you promise to answer them?"

"Answer them! Yes: were you to ask them a thousand times over, and demand a thousand details on each: only let me know my offences, that is all."

"You speak as if you had committed none," said Amelia, with a faint smile.

"At least I have been convicted of none, Amelia."

"Well, what I wish to ask you first is,—whether—whether, when you were at Wimbledon, you remembered me?"

Sir Francis started; but recovering himself instantly,—"Is this all, Amelia?"

"Not all, perhaps; but too much in itself."

"I am sorry to hear you say so, Miss Cavendish," and Sir Francis stood with contracted brow and flushed cheek before

her. "I am sorry, because I had deemed you superior to your sex, and I find that my opinion was a false one."

"This is not answering my question," said Amelia.

"It is a question that it would be waste of time to answer. I have loved you whether present or absent; but I did not know that that love was to render me insensible to the ordinary courtesies of life; and that, above all, it was to make me shun the society of those who were connected with you."

There was a bitterness in the tone of Sir Francis, and a sort of undecided anger, as it were, in his glance, which offended Amelia; and this feeling obtaining the mastery over her sorrow, she proceeded in a firmer voice to say, — "There is a difference, Sir Francis, in shunning society, and in courting it too much. Ah! why did you court mine, if now I ought to command you to shun it?"

"You have the power undoubtedly to

issue such a command, Miss Cavendish; and I trust I shall have the power to obey it; but——"

"But what?" said Amelia.

"Name my offence more specifically. Do you suppose I have been such a fool, such a madman, such a villain, as to pay my addresses to your cousin? What could be my meaning — what could be my hope — and, above all, what could be my wish, when I had the honour to be selected by you, and was, as I believed, beloved?"

"As you *believed*, beloved?" asked Amelia, with her eyes bent down.

But Sir Francis had argued himself into an idea that he had been in no way to blame, and this he did the more easily, as he had almost forgotten the days spent at Wimbledon: he considered himself treated with injustice, and he went on:—"Yet it is well — very well. Bennet told me last night to take care I was not supplanted, and I was angry

with him. On my life he did not talk as idly as he does sometimes."

"What did Captain Bennet say, Sir Francis? A lady would not wish to have Captain Bennet for a reporter."

"Captain Bennet, at least, is a man of honour, Miss Cavendish. I presume he would not say what was false."

"Your confidence in him is greater then than mine. He talks too much himself to remember what others say, and he must make them say something."

"But I suppose he did not make you praise Captain Montague."

"Captain Montague! Undoubtedly Captain Bennet could not make me praise him, or any one else. But I see no reason why I should not praise Captain Montague."

There was a short silence. Sir Francis was pale as ashes, and the hue of indignation had crimsoned the cheek of Amelia. "Go on, madam, go on; but you had another question to ask, and ere I depart, permit me to hear it."

Amelia hesitated. — "What engagement had you last night, Sir Francis?"

Sir Francis could not become paler than he was before; but every muscle of his countenance assumed a sudden contraction, and his limbs trembled. "Miss Cavendish — Amelia — what have you heard? But he could not, he dared not: were I to think so," and Sir Francis clenched his hand and ground his teeth as he spoke, "he should pay for it, even with his blood!"

Terrified at his violence, as well as compassionating his emotion, Amelia approached him where he stood. — "Listen to me, Frank: I am wretched, I am miserable ——"

"We are both wretched, we are both miserable, and Bennet shall answer for it dearly."

"Captain Bennet! Frank, Frank, why do you speak again of Captain Bennet? What has Captain Bennet to do with this?"

"What has he to do with it? Has he not betrayed me?"

"Betrayed you! Ah! you have betrayed yourself. I am answered: it is as I suspected, and yet it may not be as bad as I imagined. Answer me, as you value your honour and my love — answer me, if you wish we should still be the same to each other — answer me, in your truth, your uprightness, and as conscious that God sees us both, — answer me, where were you last night?"

"Would to God, Amelia, I had been with you!"

"Would to God, Frank, you had; but answer me."

"I cannot answer you, Amelia; do not be without pity, without remembrance. It is past — it is irretrievable."

"Did I not say to you once, Frank, if there is any character I detest, it is that of a gamester!"

"Detest, hate, abhor me then as you will: I see it is your wish to do so. I

had the presentiment of what would happen ere we parted. I felt how it would be; and he — that smooth-spoken, that courteous coxcomb, — what fatality made me insist on his visiting me at Sydney? Yes, Amelia, say what you will, I know why I am warned off — I know why you drive me from you. It is not for an error, a madness of the moment, that you do this; but I give you credit for finding the occasion so readily: it is because that fellow, that Montague, contrived to please you better than I could do; and if I am not revenged now, I shall have my revenge hereafter!"

Amelia looked at him in an agony of amazement that permitted her not to speak, but when, at length, she attempted to do so, he interrupted her suddenly:— "I am going, Miss Cavendish, I am going; but take care how you goad me on too far. Foolish acts and evil ones are done when the heart is worked upon as mine has been. If I seal our separation for ever, it is you alone who are to blame.

You have deceived me — you have played falsely with the most sacred promises; and all this is for him — for him, and his new prosperity!"

"Sir Francis, if you can insult me with such a suspicion — a suspicion so degrading to me, so derogatory to yourself — the sooner we part the better. I could never commit my happiness to the man who thought so lightly of my integrity, my honour."

"Is it not so? Must it not be so? Am I not justified in drawing this conclusion? Do you not bring against me one accusation, and then leave it for another? Do you not do this at the very moment when Montague has it in his power to offer you his hand? What do I want more to prove why I am rejected?"

"Sir Francis, your own violence has been your greatest enemy: it has shown me you felt yourself in fault — it has offended me, hurt me, alarmed me — it has shown me what I might have had to suffer had we ——" She could not finish

the sentence: the tears stood in her eyes. Sir Francis saw this, and he became at once as calm as he was contrite.

He took her hand. "Amelia, I have been to blame, and I entreat your forgiveness. I can say no more for the past; but for the future, I offer to bind myself by the most sacred vow that man can pronounce before his God, never to compromise my integrity and your peace as I did last night. All I will ask in return is, that when he calls, you will not see Captain Montague."

Amelia withdrew her hand. "You ask what you have no right to demand, and what I could not have the power to perform. If Captain Montague calls, I cannot close my father's doors against him; and undoubtedly his first visit will not be to my father."

"Very well, Madam, very well. I was a fool to prostrate my spirit as I have done; yet when I saw—but it is plain, too plain. We are to part,—we must

part: you to forget,—I to be forgotten. I shall write to your father to-morrow."

Amelia stood motionless as a statue, but with cheeks that told there was tumult within. Her pride and her womanly reserve contested the empire with her love. Sir Francis saw the flush, but he did not interpret it faithfully: it wore an expression that was new to him; and as he felt that it was new, he fancied that it was unfavourable. How much is hazarded, how much is lost, in a moment! or what, in the reckoning of passion, appears such. Sir Francis turned hastily away—the door was closed—he was gone. Amelia's eyes had followed him thither, and there they rested. Her heart was full almost to bursting, but she was thinking too earnestly to have the power to weep; and while, still with hands clasped and motionless lips, she was burying her mind in the recollections of her grief, the door through which Sir Francis had passed was opened, and Lord De Beauvoir entered the draw-

ing-room. He advanced towards her gaily; and the tone of his voice, as he addressed her, was as cheerful as his step. She tried to speak: the effort was too painful. An hysterical sob burst from her bosom. Confused, overcome, agonized, she gave way to the oppression that came over every nerve and fibre, and wrung her hands in the desolation of an absorbing grief.

Lord De Beauvoir felt he had no right to offer consolation, nor even to remain; and, hastily retreating, he returned to Mr. Cavendish and Colonel Onslow. He knew not whether he should mention what he had witnessed, for he might be compromising the feelings of Amelia, but, again, he had left her in such a state of agitation, that he thought assistance might be requisite to restore her to herself; and it might be better that Mr. Cavendish should interrupt, by his presence, the distressing solitude of his daughter.

A hint was sufficient. Mr. Cavendish pushed from before him the glass which he had filled on the entrance of Lord De Beauvoir, and hurried up stairs.

It is not necessary to detail the scene that now took place in the drawing-room; and it was soon brought to its termination by the increasing illness of Amelia. Her father took her in his arms, and carried her to her chamber. He laid her on her bed, and knelt at her side; while her maid, at his command, unfastened her sash, and chafed her temples. She revived, and she besought him to rejoin his guests; and so earnestly did she press the point, and assure him of her convalescence, that, printing a kiss upon her cheek, he consented to do so.

Often, in the course of the evening, did he seek her room, with all a father's anxiety, to ascertain whether she continued to regain her composure. As he took her hand, in bidding her farewell for the night, he felt that there was a

feverish heat upon her skin; but she entreated that she might be left tranquil till the morning; and, with much reluctance, he acceded to the request.

CHAP. X.

" Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience !"
Much Ado about Nothing

" Prithee no more, thy speeches
Will bring me to consider that which may
Unfurnish me of reason." *The Winter's Tale*

THE day dawned on the restlessness of Amelia, and the instant that she raised her head from the pillow to gaze on the light of morning, as it forced its way through the darkened windows of her chamber, she felt that it would be impossible for her to leave her bed. Yet, helpless and feeble as she felt in body, and desolate in mind, she shrunk from the idea of interruption to her solitude, and in the stillness and compressed bitterness of her miserable thoughts, she continued to let the moments glide on

without taking account of their progress. But Mr. Cavendish, who had risen at an early hour, could not let the morning advance far without asking tidings of Amelia, and her maid knocked at the door.

"Come in," said Amelia faintly. The blended light of day, and of the lamp which was wasting rapidly away, fell on her countenance as the servant approached her bed.

"My master wanted to know how you were, ma'am. I hope I have not disturbed you; but he desired me to come, ma'am."

"O no, you did not wake me," said Amelia.

"You look ill, ma'am. What shall I bring you — are you inclined to take your coffee, or ——"

"Nothing nothing Warren: I can eat nothing, I can drink nothing, and yet I am very hot. feel my hand — is it not burning? But do not tell papa."

"But my master will ask me, ma'am; and besides, you cannot go down to breakfast, ma'am, and my master ——"

"Ah! true, true; you are right; he must know." For Amelia, ever attentive to the wishes of her father, and active in the buoyancy of health, had not suffered the habits of London dissipation to interfere with the calm regularity of her morning hours.

"Tell him I am not very well; and tell him," she added, after a pause, "that when he has breakfasted, I should like to see him"

"I should like to see him," murmured Amelia to herself; "and for what?—to ratify my unhappiness; to render it impossible to retract the past—something I said to him last night, if I remember right; but my head feels strangely confused—O my God!—have mercy on me!—guide me, guard me! It is fit, perhaps. And yet if he could be reclaimed!" And this was the first idea

which had linked itself with consolation in the mind of Amelia since the unfortunate visit to Wimbledon.

Mr. Cavendish, uneasy and alarmed, would have hastened instantly to the bedside of his daughter, but he thought that perhaps she was in hopes of obtaining some repose; and it was between ten and eleven o'clock ere he joined her. He started as he looked on her altered countenance. "My child! my Amelia! how is this?" And he gazed on her with an expression of paternal pity, which had in it more of language than even the regards of love. "But I will send for Morrison directly;" and he rang the bell.

Warren immediately made her appearance.

"Here, give me paper — ink — stay." And he moved to the writing-table, and hurriedly traced a few lines. "Send this instantly to Dr. Morrison. If he is not at home, let the messenger go after him. Send it directly."

The door closed, and he seated himself at the bed-side of Amelia.

"Now we are quiet, papa," said Amelia with a smile; "and why should we not be calm?"

The expression of her eye alarmed Mr. Cavendish. He felt her hand, and the quick and irregular throbbing of her pulse increased his alarm. "Hush! you must not talk too much. I will sit by you, but you must say nothing."

"Nothing! not when I have so much to say? Ah! let me talk now. When Dr. Morrison comes, he will order me to be silent; and I wanted to speak to you about — Sir Francis Leslie."

She repeated the name slowly and gravely, and apparently with effort; but the effort was of service to her. her ideas had collected themselves again, and the sorrow in her eye was calm.

"Do you believe it, my dear, dear papa? Can you believe it? And she too — she would never have allowed of such a thing; so good, so kind, so inno-

cent, so gentle. Still it seems to me as if there were some truth in it. Perhaps I might have forgiven — yet I do not know — my love would have been wounded as well as my pride. But it is the other: did you ever suspect that, papa? — A gamester!"

"Amelia, my best Amelia! these are subjects we cannot discuss at present: there will be time enough to do so when you are well. One thing I know, if Sir Francis costs you yet more of suffering or of sorrow, I shall reprobate eternally the foolish weakness that ever made me consider him a fit alliance for you."

"O do not speak of him so hastily, do not, I cannot bear it; you make me tremble, as he did yesterday, when he looked at me, and spoke so unkindly."

"Did he presume to do this?" said Mr. Cavendish. "Fool, and more than fool! but he shall feel, he shall admit, he shall suffer for what he has done."

"O no! I could not see him suffer — and as for me ——"

"For you! it is easy, very easy, love, to forget when we have ceased to esteem."

"Do you think it is so very easy?" said Amelia, and she sighed deeply: "O that I could sleep, and forget it all!"

She closed her eyes as she said this; and Mr. Cavendish watched anxiously the dose that stole over her, and felt pleased to see it terminate in a gentle slumber.

"This illness will pass away," said he to himself; "it will pass away, and leave no trace behind it; but all will not be as it was before, and do I wish that it should? Ask me not the question, my child."

He paused, and printed a kiss on the forehead of his daughter. "How beautiful she is!" was the reflection of the father; "and he dared to agitate, to alarm her! Shall he not find his recompense for this? Her tears will flow for a while, but her woman's pride will check them. Something she has heard — I have suspected more. She will do any

thing sooner than let the world imagine she pines after him. I will surround her with the best, the handsomest, the bravest her destiny shall be in her own hands; but I know what her decision will be. Must she not be alive to admiration, with its incense — love, with its thousand sighs? There is Lord De Beauvoir; why should she not be attracted by De Beauvoir? There is Captain Montague — but I must see him first. Yes, my Amelia, choose where you may, your choice will confer honour; and, above all things, learn to forget that Leslie."

Mr. Cavendish in his animation pronounced the last few words aloud, and Amelia started from sleep with a long and heavy sigh. A knock was heard at the hall-door, and Mr. Cavendish left the room to meet Dr. Morrison.

In a few minutes afterwards the physician was introduced to the bed-side of the invalid. He perceived at once that the indisposition of the body had been aggravated and in a great measure

brought on by mental anxiety. He prescribed medicines accordingly, and recommended that the most perfect tranquillity should be kept around her.

Mr. Cavendish therefore thought it better to leave her to the care of her maid; and he had scarcely taken leave of Dr. Morrison ere a letter was put into his hands, which he perceived at once came from Sir Francis Leslie. Closing the library-door, and then pausing where he stood, he tore it hastily open.

"I know not how to begin this miserable letter: I am not conscious that you are my enemy, yet I dare not say to myself that you are my friend. Your daughter—but doubtless she has told you all—she would not hesitate to do so, as she could with so little commiseration for the state she threw me in, bring her accusations against me. Of these one was unfounded, and as foolish as it was false. The other—Cavendish, I did not add dissimulation to my offence. I con-

fessed that, insensate as I was, I had been drawn within the vortex of the gaming-table; but I implored her pardon with all the humility of which man is capable when he loves, and I offered the most sacred guarantee for the future. What did I ask in return? — a thing so slight, so absolutely indifferent, had she loved me, that neither of us would have thought on the subject again. But she refused me this request, and I shall remember the refusal long after she has forgotten it.

"However, to the point. I was fool enough to game, but who told it to Amelia? Women do not easily hear these things; and she had but just arrived in town. Who has betrayed me? I insist upon knowing. My happiness is wrecked for ever. Tell me where I am to pour my maledictions. She has renounced me; I am too proud to sue again. She loves me no longer. I accused her of this last night. I would accuse her of it again if we met. But

we shall not meet. One question I have asked you: I await your reply.

F. L."

Mr. Cavendish remained fixed to the spot where he had read the letter, nor did a change pass over his countenance. After the lapse of three or four minutes, he seated himself at the table, and wrote as follows:—

"I have received your letter; and even while I sit down to answer it, a doubt arises in my mind as to whether it can really have been written by you. This doubt will show you what I thought of you once, and what I think of you now. You ask me who has betrayed you? I know of no one who has acted falsely by you; although certainly we have no right to expect that if our actions be not what they ought to be, the world will stand by and say nothing. I have professed my ignorance on this head; but even had I been aware who had given

intimation to my child of what had passed, it could scarcely be expected that as a man of honour I should give up the name to you.

"I have never been your enemy. Amelia could not stand in need of my counsel, in an affair where the delicate sensibility of the female heart, and the rectitude of female honour, would act as guide and guardian. That heart has been wounded — God knows how deeply — and she has done wisely if she has reclaimed it from one who, it would appear, knew not its value. It is painful to tear ourselves away from the impressions, or, it may be, the prejudices of years; but it is better to do this, if it must be done, suddenly than slowly. As I counselled not Amelia, as I intend not to counsel her, neither do I counsel you. I did so once, but in vain.

"It is probable it may be long ere we meet; accept, therefore, my wishes that the future may be at once wiser, and

better, and happier, if possible, than the past.

" GEORGE CAVENDISH.

" Hill-Street, December."

Sir Francis Leslie was pacing the apartment in his hotel with the quick and irregular step of passion when he received the reply of Mr. Cavendish. He paused not till he reached the conclusion.—" It is done then," said he, as clenching the letter in his hand he thrust it into his bosom. "This, this shall be my voucher. Let us see who will forget the first — let us see who will earliest mock at the recollections of years. I will revenge myself on her heartlessness before she has that fool in her chains. She has pointed out the road to me, and I will stir heaven and earth to get the thing accomplished."

He rang the bell violently; and when the servant entered, he desired that his horse might be saddled immediately. " Hark you, let not a soul be admitted

I must not be interrupted." But he had scarcely said this, when Captain Bennet, whistling carelessly, walked into the room.

"In the name of Heaven, Leslie, what is the matter with you? You are as pale as the ghost in Hamlet, when he wears his beaver up. And as for those fine locks which you used to arrange so carefully at Sydney, they are in a dishabille that is any thing but graceful."

"You may see, Captain Bennet, that I am not in a laughing humour; and, indeed, in no humour for any thing that is pleasant in this world," and Sir Francis coloured even to his brow.

"Come, come, my good fellow, this fit will wear itself out, depend upon it, and not you. May I venture to inquire the cause? A lover's quarrel, in all likelihood. Heaven defend me from the cause or the effect! — But, pshaw! as you are in for it, bear it like a man: it is the privilege of lovers to quarrel, you know——"

"And of friends to offend, I presume? I am sick of love, of friendship, of man, of woman."

"Why you are Hamlet himself instead of the ghost now; but recollect Hamlet was a philosopher amidst all his troubles. Now, though I am none, I recommend philosophy to every one else."

"Once for all, Bennet, I must beg you to have done with your jests. I am not well — I am not myself — I know not what I say, nor what I do."

"How very lucky, then, I happened to come in just at this moment! — I am not disposed to be offended when I see a man is really and *bonâ fide* unhappy. Really, Leslie, I am quite concerned for you. What has happened: any more losses at play? You will be luckier another time."

"Captain Bennet, this is a subject on which I will not hear a word: you have ruined me."

"Ruined you! You must be prodi-

giously in haste to be ruined, Leslie. Do I not know your resources, your expectations?"

"My expectations? Yes. they were happy ones yesterday: to-day, I cannot say what they are to-day."

"What! — Has the old woman died and disinherited you?"

Sir Francis rose suddenly from the chair on which he had flung himself, and said in a tone of low and stifled anger,— "You must speak otherwise when you speak of Mrs. Mortimer. I was not thinking either of her or of her fortune; but there are some men who deem there are no hopes, no expectations, worth attending to, but those which are limited to that vile and dirty gold which makes so many of their fellow-creatures fools and villains. Would to God I had touched none but what came to me honoured by the hands that gave it! Would to God I had not wasted that honourable gold amongst the careless and the profligate!

But that is not the worst: I have lost her. — What am I thinking of to mention her here?" and he remained wrapt in a dark and moody silence.

Captain Bennet did not venture to interrupt him; and he had even risen to go, when the servant entered to inform Sir Francis that his horse was at the door.

"Your horse! Why you are not going out to ride?"

"I *am* going out riding, Captain Bennet."

"What! in the Park? Well, I don't care if I go there myself."

"I am not going to the Park. I have business out of town."

"An odd place for business, and an odd time you have chosen for transacting it. Forgive me, my good fellow; but, to own the truth, you alarm me: and you have no idea how strangely you look. Do take the trouble to walk up to the pier-glass there. It will bear witness to your sighs at any rate; and that it appears is more than the lady will — but a

truce to jesting. My dear Leslie, you know I am an old friend; that is to say, an intimate one, which is the same thing."

"And a sincere friend," said Sir Francis, looking at him fixedly.

"Leslie, there is no misunderstanding you. I see that this unfortunate affair at the club is hanging over you; and you accuse me of having been instrumental in leading you into the scrape. Scrape it certainly is, to judge by your words — your manner: though I swear to you that, had I imagined for a moment, that what you lost could be the slightest inconvenience to you, I would have cut off my right hand sooner than have led you into it."

Sir Francis said nothing; but his brow was less contracted than it had been before — and Captain Bennet went on.

"Upon my soul, Leslie, you have no notion how distressed I am to find you thus; and doubly so, to think I have innocently been the cause of it. But the

fact was, you looked so listless, so *ennuyé*, that I was absolutely infected with your evil disposition — and so I took pity on you and myself. Come, my good fellow, hang me if you shall punish me with the loss of your friendship. I know its value better."

"Bennet, here is my hand, let us part friends: you wish it, and I do not wish the contrary. Good morning. I told you I was engaged. Some other time, if you please; but now the very air of this room is odious to me—it suffocates, it annihilates me." And Sir Francis put his hand to his forehead with an expression of sudden pain.

"Leslie, where are you going? This is not the question of idle curiosity. I am interested for you: you must tell me."

"I can easily answer you," said Sir Francis, with a ghastly smile. "I am going to Wimbledon."

"To Wimbledon! And to meet some one, I presume!"

"Undoubtedly," answered Sir Francis, vacantly.

"Well," said Captain Bennet, after a pause, "I am sorry, prodigiously sorry that the business has gone so far — and vexed to the heart that you did not think of selecting me as your friend on the occasion. This, at least, was to be expected."

"What was to be expected?" asked Sir Francis, with an air of amazement.

"I say you should have asked me to go with you to Wimbledon."

"Good heavens! Captain Bennet, are you mad?"

"Mad? What should make me mad? I am neither running post haste to steal a woman's heart, nor take a man's life. I say you have slighted me. I was the very fellow fit for the affair. I could measure the ground to an inch with my eye, if such things were allowable. I tell you again, I am just the man for your purpose, but it seems you did not think so."

"Bennet, upon my honour, I can stand this no longer. I am engaged in no duel. I am going to visit a lady"

"Going to visit a lady! Well, if this is not a climax! To go out visiting in such a mood as I have had the pleasure to find you in! How extremely glad the lady will be to see you? I give her joy of the honour of your visit. Positively I must come to-morrow to hear the result; but, by the by, it must be Mrs. Cavendish you are going to see, and the fair Henrietta."

Sir Francis became pale as death; and, after standing for a moment motionless and silent, he snatched his hat from the table, and hurried down stairs.

"A fine fellow that, and a strange one," cried Bennet, as he prepared to follow his example. "There is something in this I do not understand; but I will find it out, or my name is not Bennet."

CHAP. XI.

"Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth"
Lear.

"This service is not service so being done,
But being so allow'd." *Cymbeline*

The snow was falling in large flakes when Sir Francis Leslie pulled up his horse at the gate which opened into Mrs. Cavendish's grounds at Wimbledon. He leaped from the saddle, and the sudden shock with which his feet met the ground, and the pause which succeeded, awakened him to a recollection of what he had done, and of what he was about to do. In the rapidity of his ride from town, he had half forgotten what his feelings, his intentions were; but now, letting his head fall on his horse's neck, he gave himself up to the ideas that came rushing over his mind. At this moment Mr. Stanhope's man, Stevens, who had been

on an errand to the village, advanced down the road. He started at seeing Sir Francis — and fancying that he was suffering from sudden indisposition, he hastened to his side,

"Sir Francis Leslie! Sir! Is any thing the matter? Speak to me, sir. Lean on my arm — pray come to the house, sir."

Sir Francis roused himself at the sound of these words. "There is nothing the matter, thank you, Stevens. I am quite well." And Sir Francis mechanically giving to him his horse's rein, attempted to open the gate. "I ought to know the turn of this gate," said he, making another ineffectual effort to open it; "but my hand is numbed with the cold."

Stevens shook his head, opened the gate, and followed Sir Francis slowly to the house.

Fortunately for the former, as far as the present was concerned, neither Mrs. Cavendish nor her daughter was at home at the time of his arrival. He flung himself, therefore, in his moody solitude, on

the couch in the breakfast-room; and, with his eyes fixed on the sparkling fire before him, and his hands clasped on his forehead, he lay apparently thinking of nothing, while in reality he was thinking of every thing,—of every thing that concerned his dearest interests in this life; and who is there that feels not that his own individual world of thought has in it that multiplied array of images, which, as it passes along, throws all else into the shade?

While Sir Francis was agitating himself amongst the realities or the chimeras of this absorbing world, Stevens had found his way to a small apartment in which Mr. Stanhope generally passed his mornings. Provided at once with an excuse for his appearance, and an introduction to the subject he had determined to enter on, he laid a volume of poems on the table, saying, "I have found the book, sir, you were asking for yesterday, the book Sir Francis Leslie sent down here three days ago. I thought, sir, from his

doing so, we were not to see him at Wimbledon just at present; but he is this moment arrived."

"Arrived! what, in the midst of this bitter weather!—and my sweet Henrietta! They would go, Stevens, in spite of all I could say, to Roehampton; and I knew, from the look of the clouds, we should have snow. You know I told you so when I got up. Heaven forbid they should be crossing the common just now! I am certain she will catch cold."

"Pray do not alarm yourself, sir. You may depend upon it they are at this moment safe and comfortable at Roehampton. Besides, Miss Cavendish does not mind the weather. There are others, if I do not mistake, who want pity more than she does. May I venture to speak a word, sir?"

"To be sure," said Mr. Stanhope, taking off his spectacles, and laying them on the table. Stevens understood the full meaning of the signal; and as there

was no occasion to be frugal of the moments, he commenced methodically.

"I overtook Sir Francis Leslie, sir, at the first gate."

"Well, Stevens?"

"He was off his horse——"

"Not thrown, I hope?" exclaimed Mr. Stanhope. "God forbid the poor young man should meet with such an accident!"

"Thrown, sir? Did I say any thing that sounded like thrown? No, no, sir, safe enough as to his body, I believe; but—" and he lowered his voice mysteriously—"true enough what I told you before, sir: he is unhappy in his mind; and if you had seen him as I did, and known as much of him as I do, you must have thought the same."

"I am sorry for it," said Mr. Stanhope, with a sigh.

"If I might presume to advise, sir," said Stevens doubtingly, "it may be some time ere the ladies come home; and all this time, sir, he is brooding over his

dark thoughts. I am sure he would be glad to see you, sir, and there is no saying what he might tell you. Yes, yes, he is ill either in body or in mind. When I came up to him, sir, he had his face leaning over his horse; and, startled as I was at seeing him stand in that manner for no reason, as one might say, credit me, sir, I was more startled still when he raised his face, and I saw how deadly pale he was."

"That might be from the cold," said Mr. Stanhope, with simplicity.

"Cold, sir! I have lived long enough to know whether a man looks pale from cold or from sickness, or from sorrow, or what not. But I hope I may have been mistaken. Shall I go and bring you your medicine, sir?"

"Stay a little, Stevens — and so, poor fellow, he looked unhappy, did he? And now I am no wiser; for I cannot think what can make him unhappy when Henrietta loves him."

"But, sir, I am afraid it is some more

of those losses at play. You seemed inclined to doubt the correctness of my information, sir, the other day; but I questioned Sir Francis's groom again when he brought down the book. It is a fact well known, sir."

"Ah! that horrible love of play!" said Mr. Stanhope, rising suddenly from his easy chair, and letting his hand fall with violence on the table, "Stevens, Stevens, it must never be; I cannot permit it — that is, for I am foolish to talk of permission — I mean, I must speak to Mrs. Cavendish. Henrietta must not be sacrificed, and yet I pity him too. Perhaps she loves him; and then, such a creature to make him happy; and that Heaven should be kind to him in vain! — Aye, it is so too often with us frail creatures. God never forgets us; but we forget ourselves, and then we talk of our ill fortune."

"Ah! sir, how I like to hear you talk so," said Stevens: "I am sure if you would but reason with Sir Francis — hea-

ven knows if ever he has had reason spoken to him in his life — I mean, in the way of advice. Do, sir, pray speak to him; hear what he has to say. He respects you, sir, for your age, your benevolence ——"

"Hush, Stevens! do not flatter me."

"Well then, sir, I will not; but I must say also, that being Miss Henrietta's uncle, he will listen to you with such attention, such anxiety, to reform what you judge amiss!"

"What I judge amiss! I must not take too much on me," said Mr. Stanhope, with a sigh, "and yet I may as well go and join him, Stevens: it is not kind to leave him alone, and perhaps when I see him I shall think of something to say. I have always found it best not to consider speeches beforehand. Let us trust to the heart, and it never fails us: according to its bidding let us speak, or be silent."

"That would not do always," thought Stevens; "but I believe it would do always for my master:" and this uncon-

scious commendation was no mean one. As Mr. Stanhope finished speaking, he closed carefully the book he had been reading, and prepared to leave the room. Stevens congratulated himself on his success. And if it be asked what subject of personal congratulation it afforded, it must be said in reply, that he was one of those persons who grasp at any occasion that brings into play their own sagacity, and that he had such a lurking talent for every thing that bore the appearance of manœuvring, or, to speak more simply and perhaps more correctly, of management; he was so fond of leading his master, and of giving his master something to do, that even where other advantages remained in perspective, he buoyed himself up with the feeling that if he was not of importance, his actions were. It is surprising how the world in its judgments is biassed by situation. We take easily into the account the intrigues of policy, the oppressions of power, the exactions of pride, and the daring of ambition, be-

cause we consider the cause as adequate to the effect—forgetting that between inferior agents and their actions there still exists the same proportion—and because either the glare or the darkness that surround the pathway of the great prevent us from tracing those minor and subordinate motives of conduct which assimilate it to that of more ordinary life, and of the existence of which the actors are themselves so conscious, that they withdraw them cautiously from the eye of the world, and urge forward on the imperfection of its vision a train of causes which it piques itself on having discovered while at a distance.

Mr. Stanhope had now reached the door of the breakfast-room, and it was opened by Stevens in his usual slow decided manner. "My master, Sir Francis!" and Sir Francis started on his feet, confounded at the unexpectedness of the interruption.

"You may go, Stevens," said Mr. Stanhope; "the chair is very well where

it is. Pardon me, Sir Francis," he continued, after the door had been closed as slowly, though certainly not as decidedly as it had been opened, "pardon me, that I appeared so deficient in good manners as not to speak to you on my entrance; but somehow I thought you were startled by my coming on you so suddenly, and ——"

"Startled, sir! What should startle me, my dear Mr. Stanhope? You deserve at all times a better welcome than I can give you; but be assured I am sensible of the honour you do me:" and Sir Francis paused, as if not knowing what to say next.

"But," said Mr. Stanhope, "I don't know why we are both standing; and, besides, I came here on purpose to talk to you: — I am idle, sir, I am idle" — and Mr. Stanhope seated himself in the chair which Stevens had placed by the fire.

There was something in the manner of Mr. Stanhope, and the regular announcement of the purpose for which he came,

so different from his usual timid reserve, that Sir Francis hastily alluded to his unpleasant ride from town, in order to lead the conversation to subjects of ordinary interest.

"True, true," said Mr. Stanhope, after a pause, — "a most disagreeable day for a ride; but young men think little of these things — especially" — and he hesitated — "when they are able to say to themselves, 'How happy I shall be at the end of the journey!'"

"Would to Heaven," thought Sir Francis, "I could have said such a thing either to myself or others!" and the remark jarred so on his mind that he offered no reply.

This silence was formidable to a person as shy as Mr. Stanhope, and it gave leisure for his embarrassment to return: he conquered it, however, in some degree, and said, "My niece and her dear child are both out, Sir Francis: an old man's company is but a poor substitute for theirs; but again, there are cases where

an old man's counsel may stand us more in stead than a lady's pity; and—pardon me, dear Sir Francis—but you seem as if something had distressed you, for your cheek is very pale, and your lip too. Ah! young man! young man! that lip should be redder than it is just now. Are you ill? are you unhappy? For God's sake, tell me if you are. You do not know, if I were to exert myself—and in this case I should be spurred on—for I love her dearly—what service I could be of to you and her."

Sir Francis coloured: there was the momentary glance of extreme surprise, and then a slight inclination of the head, as he said, with an air of pained reserve, —"I thank you, Mr. Stanhope; but I am not aware what right I could possibly have to intrude my sources of vexation, if such I had, on your notice. Your age, Mr. Stanhope, and your observation, although not your experience, will have taught you, that men most generally bring their misfortunes on themselves. Far be it from me to interrupt the tran-

quillity of a man whom I esteem as I do you, by the recital of any of those evil hours, or wretched feelings, which, if the crowd presses on us closely, must, some day or other, be the lot of us all."

"You talk rationally, even if you have acted——"

"Foolishly?" said Sir Francis, hastily.

"No, no, not foolishly," Mr. Stanhope eagerly repeated, and a blush, that pained the generous feeling of Sir Francis, struggled for mastery with the paleness of age and infirmity. "God forbid I should hurt your feelings by any words of mine! I began my sentence like other fine orators," added he, with an embarrassed smile, "without thinking how I should end it. But come, I must gather up my resolution again. Do you wonder how I have made up my mind to be so bold?—Well, then, I will tell you. I admire, I esteem your Miss Cavendish so much, that I am haunted day and night by a dread that she should not be as happy as she deserves. True, I have not

known her long — but who can know her without loving her? — and as soon as I was made aware that — you understand me, Sir Francis? — and I could not be angry with her for choosing you, it was all quite natural, — only when I was told — Ah! Sir Francis, it is a shocking, a horrible thing to have a turn for play! It ruins us, body and soul — it ruins ourselves, our families — it blunts our good feeling — it creeps over the surface of our honour by degrees, and withers it, and poisons it. O Sir Francis!" and the old man brushed a tear from his eye, and sighed deeply.

Not a word, not a look, escaped Sir Francis: his feelings it is useless to attempt to describe; he could not have analysed them himself. Mr. Stanhope went on: — "I have told you what I have heard, Sir Francis, and now I seem to breathe more freely. I should appear to you, and perhaps really be an officious meddling fool, did I do this without some hope to lead me on — some

motive to warrant my boldness. Candour, dear Sir Francis, candour. Use as much courage as I have done — treat me like a friend. I have never offered my friendship idly, nor when I thought it was not wanted; and you do want it, Sir Francis: — you are unhappy."

Sir Francis extended his hand, and at length, in a low tone, he said — "Yes, Mr. Stanhope, I am unhappy; it is useless to deny that I am so. But having said this, all is finished: it is impossible that even your friendship can be of service to me — I have thrown away my own happiness. Let me, at least, sit down in silence to look upon the wreck."

"You have been unfortunate at play, I doubt not; at least, I hope that you have given it up for ever."

"It is idle, sir, to talk now of what I have done, or what I mean to do."

"How idle? Surely not, if you regard your own happiness or hers; and if you still hope to be allowed to love her, and to win her love in return."

Sir Francis became suddenly and deeply agitated. — "That, Mr. Stanhope, is past for ever: we are parted — every thing is over."

"Parted!—Impossible! These things are not done so quietly. No, no: old as I am, I remember enough of the feelings of my youth to be aware not only how love affairs begin, but how they finish."

"I repeat, sir, that this affair is finished. It is not likely I should bear testimony against myself, were I not unfortunately compelled to do so."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Stanhope, after a pause, "if I suspect still that there is some mistake."

"Mistake, Mr. Stanhope? What on earth, sir, are you thinking of?"

"Not so hastily, Sir Francis: you will find I am not so wrong, after all."

"In God's name," said Sir Francis, with an air of anger and bewilderment, "what is the meaning of all this?"

"Hush! hush! young man: do not bring the name of God into the midst of

earthly passion: he is witness, without our calling on him to be so. Do not make me repent that I have sought this conversation. Let us talk calmly and rationally."

"It is impossible to talk calmly, sir, or rationally either, on such a subject. Undoubtedly, I would not voluntarily forget the respect I owe to your age, your character. I would add, that I thank you for your sympathy, your counsel, and your wish to be of service to me; but I cannot possibly conceive what interest you can have in my affairs, whether they concern any unfortunate embarrassment, justly, too justly, incurred at play, or my attachment to Miss Cavendish."

"Stay, stay a little," said Mr Stanhope, putting his hand slowly to his forehead: "this is a regular harangue, it seems to me, and I must try to answer it: but give me time — a little, little time," and he leaned his head upon his hand, while Sir Francis walked hastily up and down the room. "Your embarrass-

ments at play? Your attachment to Miss Cavendish? — Why do you state these separately? Have they not, or ought they not to have, a relation to each other?"

"True," said Sir Francis half aloud, and still walking at a rapid pace, — "they have been most unfortunately connected with each other; but I would rather not be reminded of it."

"But, dear Sir Francis, there is one thing that puzzles me. If all is as you say——"

"If all is as I say, Mr. Stanhope?"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Stanhope, not at all aware of the doubt he had implied — "what brings you here just now?" — Sir Francis gazed at him in silent astonishment. — "Well, I see you do not like to answer me; but we have wandered from the question — I am apt to forget — we were talking of your losses at play."

"If you would permit me, sir, to decline the subject——"

"No," said Mr. Stanhope, "I crave your forgiveness; but as I have got so far, I would rather go on at once. If—" and he hesitated, for he felt the delicate importance of what he was going to say—"you must forgive me, you must, indeed; do not be offended; but if—do not you think that if I had the idea you could still make her happy—and if I saw you were suffering severely from your imprudence, and had repented of it,—I might—why should I not? What service is money to an old man unless he is ready to make use of it in cases like these?"

"Sir!" exclaimed Sir Francis, and farther than this he felt it impossible to say. He might understand the meaning of Mr. Stanhope, yet he could scarcely acknowledge that he did so; and besides, the extraordinary colour of the business altogether,—his total ignorance of any motive which could fully account for such voluntary generosity in a stranger,—all combined to force to such a height his

feeling of perplexity, that he felt like a person in one of those bewildering dreams, where the same idea, though varied in its confusion, presses pertinaciously and like a haunting shadow through the chambers of the brain.

"Do you understand me, dear Sir Francis?" asked Mr. Stanhope anxiously.

Sir Francis remained silent.

"I am sorry, very sorry, I have explained myself so ill. It seems to me so easy to arrange all this; and then she, you know — women soon forgive when they love — and if she has once loved you, I am sure she loves you still ——"

"Mr. Stanhope, she does not love me!" said Sir Francis, with an angry decision in his tone.

"And yet you come here to-day?" repeated Mr. Stanhope.

Sir Francis could command himself no longer. "Mr. Stanhope, I beseech you, for the love of Heaven, — you who are so kind, so good, so generous, — have pity

on me! I cannot explain myself. Do not torture me in this manner."

"I did not know I was torturing you; but I will leave you. You can think of what I have said, you must think of it. I see you consider me importunate. Ah! Sir Francis, this is not my character; and do you not think the motive must be very, very strong to make me step forward in this manner?"

"I should have conceived so, certainly; but as I cannot by any possibility discover what that motive can be, I hope I may stand excused for any inadvertence, any want of consideration, I may have been guilty of this morning. I feel I have laid myself open to the charge, and I entreat you to pardon me."

"Pardon you! yes, with all my soul. Here is my hand; and as for my heart, it is warmer than you thought it likely to be: but I will talk to you when you are calmer, that is to say, if you wish I

should talk to you; and I am determined on one thing without your permission — I must try to oblige you one way or other. I know what you are thinking of in regard to Henrietta, and I will plead to the sweet child for you."

This concluding remark put the finishing stroke to the distressing perplexity of Sir Francis; and while he stood in the silence of his amazement, Mr. Stanhope hurried from the room.

CHAP. XII.

"— I am a little slow of credit
In the sincerity of women's actions
* * * * * *
You have been misinform'd,
* * * * * *
There's somewhat still of mystery in this"

Mourning Bride.

"THE ladies will be here directly, Sir Francis," said the footman, as he entered the room, and proceeded to arrange the fire. At this announcement Sir Francis found himself irresistibly drawn to the window, and his surprise was unpleasant in the extreme when he perceived that they were escorted by Colonel Onslow. "There is no bearing all this," said he to himself, "yes, so it is always, — let there be ninety-nine chances out of a hundred in your favour, as sure as possible that one you did not reckon on turns up against you. Who would have dreamt of Colonel Onslow coming to Wimbledon to-day, when Bennet met

him with Lord De Beauvoir on the King's Road yesterday, going thither full speed? Heaven and earth are leagued against me!" and, angry with himself and Colonel Onslow, Sir Francis retired from the window only to return to it again.

The walking party in the mean time had gained the house, and the gay laugh of Colonel Onslow rang yet more disagreeably on the ear of Sir Francis than did the sound of his military step as it echoed through the hall.

"Come in, come in, Mrs. Cavendish; come in, Henrietta: I had to overtake you before; but I am in the advanced guard now:" and Colonel Onslow opening the door to its full extent, bowed with mock ceremony as the ladies passed on to the breakfast-room.

They had scarcely entered, when they caught sight of Sir Francis, and Mrs. Cavendish went up to him directly. It is possible that had Colonel Onslow not been present, Sir Francis would have exhibited some outward symptoms that all

was not right within; but men shrink from betraying their weakness to each other, and the influence of this feeling was of infinite service to Sir Francis.

"Good morning, Mrs. Cavendish:—I have been looking for you this half hour or more. Let me lead you to the fire—you must be perished with cold. And, Henrietta—are you quite well, Henrietta? Colonel Onslow, how are you?"

Henrietta advanced smilingly, and gave her hand to Sir Francis. Colonel Onslow, with polite gravity, returned the bow that had been made him, and, at the request of Mrs. Cavendish, came and placed himself between her and Henrietta on the sofa.

"Let me disrobe you of your furs," said he, the gravity of the moment being succeeded by an animated smile. "After all, these things are a disguise, though I was admiring them just now; but what," added he, in a low tone to Mrs. Cavendish, "should I not admire on you?"

Mrs. Cavendish blushed deeply. Never since their earlier days of intimacy had Colonel Onslow addressed her with that peculiar tone and manner which render language, otherwise ordinary enough, hieroglyphical of deeper sentiments than those which it openly conveys, sentiments whose individual interest is greater, because in part concealed. She felt that she was again beloved. There are cases in which the delicate intuition of sympathy assumes all the force of conviction; and why should it appear extraordinary that the realities of truth should be impressed sometimes instantaneously on a mind in the full possession of its waking powers, when the delusions of fiction, the unsolicited shadows of the imagination, take their passage to and fro over the sleep which has all the absence of volition and the helplessness that render it like death?

"Certainly," said Onslow, in a gayer voice, "I had not imagined I should have had the pleasure of seeing you so

very soon again when I parted from you yesterday. but I appeal to Sir Francis, whether men always know their own minds or not?"

This was said carelessly enough; and perhaps, as Onslow felt some curiosity as to what the answer might be, he wore purposely that air of indifference which looked as if he hardly expected that an answer should be given at all. He had guessed with tolerable correctness, and indeed had received information subsequently, of the decided nature of Sir Francis Leslie's last interview with Amelia Cavendish; but as it was not to be supposed that he knew any thing about it, he could only feel his way cautiously. It would be doing injustice to Colonel Onslow to imagine that any motive, either idle in its origin or selfish in its nature, prompted him thus to sound the painful secrets of Sir Francis. Honourable, gentlemanly, and somewhat reserved in his general manner, he would scarcely have touched even the limits of

such hazardous ground; and the approach to it was indeed rendered more delicate by the slightness of his acquaintance with Sir Francis, had he not felt, in reference to the general colour of the business, that as Henrietta's guardian he had been somewhat slighted, and perhaps deceived, either by Mrs. Cavendish or Sir Francis. It may be remembered, that he had spoken to Mrs. Cavendish on the subject, and he would ere this have spoken to her again, had it not so happened that shortly after that conversation Sir Francis had almost entirely withdrawn himself from Wimbledon.

Mr. Stanhope's allusion to the verses in the Album on the day before, had recalled to Colonel Onslow's mind the suspicion which, during the secession of Sir Francis, had been half forgotten, and he accused himself at Mr. Cavendish's afterwards of having, by his negligent forgetfulness of the trust reposed in him, contributed passively to the unhappiness of more than one. "Yes," he had said

to Lord De Beauvoir, when, during the absence of Mr. Cavendish, a brief confidence was exchanged between them — "yes, I had the power to put a stop to this foolery, and I have found out that I ought to have done so, when in all probability it is too late. But something shall be done to-morrow."

He called early the following morning in Hill-Street to inquire after Amelia — was received by Mr. Cavendish, and informed in confidence of what had passed.

Undoubtedly it was with the intention above referred to — an intention which he now perceived it absolutely incumbent on him to carry into effect — that Colonel Onslow put off one or two engagements of consequence, and started for Wimbledon. But there were other things of which he thought during his ride, and whose influence interfered with the regular and decided plan he had chalked out the preceding evening; and so completely indeed had his ideas ab-

stracted themselves from the recollection of Sir Francis and his conduct, that he woke as from a dream, when on his entrance he saw the individual in question standing before him.

If Sir Francis had been vexed and annoyed by the inopportune arrival of Colonel Onslow, Colonel Onslow, for more reasons than one, deprecated the presence of Sir Francis. But he knew too much of the world to suffer himself to be baffled by any *contretems*, when there was a possibility that by good management he might eventually draw advantage from it; and it was in this spirit, and with the determination that if he must think of Sir Francis's affairs instead of his own, he would do so at once and perseveringly, that he began, like a skilful pioneer, to trace a road which might lead him to the citadel of the enemy.

The question had been asked and answered — answered as such questions usually are when ladies are in company, — that is to say, apparently as idly as it had

been asked — for the bitterness that galled the mind had not risen to the tongue. Mrs. Cavendish, however, saw that all was not right with Sir Francis, and she detected also a shade on Colonel Onslow's brow which had not been there when first they met that morning. She could partly guess its cause, and, vexed that he could suffer himself to be annoyed at such a moment with any thing that bore no reference to herself, she watched anxiously every turn of the conversation, in the hope that Colonel Onslow, animated and interested, would forget all that she did not wish him to remember.

And in fact her hope seemed to meet with its fulfilment. Sir Francis had roused himself a second time to exertion: he had drawn a chair to that end of the couch where Henrietta sat; and, partly from habit, partly from inclination, and partly from the consciousness that if he prosecuted his intention it was as well to give some previous warning of it, he di-

rected the language of the lip and of the eye to Henrietta.

Colonel Onslow apparently observed nothing of what was going on: his back was half turned from Henrietta; and if there was at any time a pause in the conversation he was holding with Mrs. Cavendish, he beguiled it in playing carelessly with the riding whip that lay across his knee, or in caressing with his foot the spaniel that was crouched before him. The time glided on, when at length suddenly addressing Henrietta, he said, "I have got a favour to ask of you; but favours are best asked in private. Mrs. Cavendish, I am going to take Henrietta off to the drawing-room — Sir Francis, you are a happy man!"

The ambiguous meaning of this phrase, the slight curve that played about the mouth, the half-contraction of the eyebrow, offended Sir Francis, — he bowed coldly and stiffly. Colonel Onslow turned to Mrs. Cavendish — "We shall be absent, — let me see, how long, — ah! that

must depend on circumstances. Come, Henrietta."

Henrietta, all surprise, prepared to accompany her guardian. Mrs. Cavendish smiled, but said nothing. Colonel Onslow had taken Henrietta's hand, and he led her quickly to the drawing-room. He closed the door carefully; and while they were yet both standing, he said, "Henrietta, Mr. Stanhope spoke yesterday of some verses Sir Francis Leslie had written to you: may I see them?"

"Yes," replied Henrietta: "but why should you wish to see them?"

"Ah! that is not the question, Henrietta: it is one thing to act, and another to find the reason for our actions. For instance, what reason, what good reason, I mean," and he laid a marked emphasis on the word, "could Sir Francis allege for writing these same verses?"

Henrietta hesitated, and was confused; at length — "But you have not seen them," she replied.

"No. — Well, where are they?" She

handed the Album slowly to him. He read the verses attentively, closed the book, and deposited it on the table again. "Let us sit down, Henrietta: I want to talk to you." Henrietta obeyed the intimation in silence. Colonel Onslow took the small white hand in his. "This is a fair hand, Henrietta; and as gentlemen who write poetry will tell you, it is the emblem of as pure a heart. I am sure, at least, I believe it to be so. Don't you think, my dear Henrietta, you ought to pause long and often before you give either of them away for ever?"

Henrietta's delicate cheek assumed a scarlet hue, and the novelty of the situation in which she found herself, its overwhelming embarrassment, brought the tear to her eyelid — a painful and struggling tear.

"Why do you agitate yourself, my dear?" said Colonel Onslow, and he gently kissed her cheek. "Be composed, and listen to me. Henrietta, you never knew your father — I knew him well: I

respected, I esteemed him, I honoured him, and he trusted me. The trust was not a light one, Henrietta; for it was you and your happiness he confided to my care. I accepted the office beside his dying bed: before I had looked on you, my poor little timid girl—I promised him faithfully to fulfil its duties then: do you think I am not still more anxious to fulfil them now?"

"You are very good," said Henrietta, in a low, soft tone, "but do not be offended; only if you had spoken to mamma on this subject, instead of to me, she would have been able to answer you much better."

Colonel Onslow half smiled; for he was not so blinded by his renewed attachment as not to have a sort of unacknowledged suspicion, that if he wished to get at the simple truth of the affair—truth without any shadows about it—he must speak to Henrietta, and not to her mother.

"But, Henrietta, as it so happens, I

have begun with you, you know you must try to get over your reluctance, and speak to me confidingly and frankly. I stand in the place of your poor father; and if he had been alive, would you not have told him all the truth?"

"But what have I to tell you?" said Henrietta, falteringly.

"We will see about that by and by," replied Colonel Onslow. "You were aware, I believe, long ago, that Sir Francis Leslie was to marry your cousin Amelia?"

"Yes, certainly, Colonel Onslow: I have known it—I cannot say exactly how long; because, you know, people do not talk of these things to children; but I have known of it for some time."

"And you knew that they were both much attached to each other?"

"O yes, for I had often seen them together."

"You are fond of Amelia? You are as fond of her as ever?"

"To be sure! why should I not?"

Here there was a short silence: it was broken by Colonel Onslow. "There is one way we should consider these things. Suppose you had been attached to Sir Francis — I mean as your cousin Amelia is — you would not have liked him to be making love, as the phrase goes, to another woman?"

Colonel Onslow would have expressed himself with more circumlocution, had he been in the habit of talking on such topics to young ladies: as it was, Henrietta looked somewhat startled; but seeing that Colonel Onslow waited for an answer, she replied, "No, I suppose I should not."

"And I, my dear, know that you would not. Well, then, now to the point: you must not be angry with me, Henrietta. Here lies the question: Sir Francis Leslie, the known, the accepted lover of your cousin, Miss Cavendish, has been making himself, or trying to make himself, agreeable to you. It would appear that he has been, by some means

or other, encouraged; because men, foolish as they are, too often, when in the presence of those whom they admire, are yet in sufficient possession of their senses to retire from the pursuit when they see at a glance that it will be unavailing. But before I proceed, it is necessary I should know the extent to which Sir Francis has gone; and yet I can scarcely believe that he has had the mad presumption to offer you his hand. Speak, Henrietta."

The extreme confusion of Henrietta incapacitated her for some moments from attempting a reply; at length she said, in a tremulous whisper, "Sir Francis has not done this, Colonel Onslow, nor did I ever think he meant to do so."

"I am glad to hear it; but Sir Francis had no right to amuse himself at your expense, allowing that after all it was nothing but flirtation. It seems to me that the line of conduct which ought to have been followed in regard to him was plain; but the misfortune is, that women

frequently act precipitately, when they ought to take time to consider, and are seized with doubts and hesitation, when they have nothing to do but to say yes or no."

Henrietta had listened with painful attention to her guardian. She was trying to gather up courage to speak openly; but she was so hurt and mortified at his last observation, that had she spoken she felt as if she should have burst into tears.

Colonel Onslow saw her agitation, and he proceeded in a softer tone: — "You do not quite understand me, Henrietta. Allowing you had by your own words, your own manner, encouraged him, a guardian far more severe than you will ever find me to be would have himself suggested your excuse. You are young, you are gentle, you are kind-hearted, and for that very reason more liable to be influenced by others. Now you may, in this very instance, have been ——" Here Colonel Onslow stopped, in evident em-

barrassment. "Did you ever think that your mother wished you to love Sir Francis Leslie?"

Henrietta hesitated. — "Once, perhaps, I did. It was one day when she asked me whether I liked Sir Francis, — but I remember she spoke to me, too, about Colonel St. Helier. So I suppose she did not mean any thing, after all."

"Colonel St. Helier! The gentleman who was with you at the play? The evening, I mean, that Lord De Beauvoir joined you?"

Henrietta looked up suddenly, and with an expression of pleased attention. The look was not lost on Colonel Onslow.

"By the by, Henrietta, Lord De Beauvoir is going down into Northumberland almost immediately. His visit yesterday was meant for a farewell one."

"Yes, I believe so," said Henrietta, with an unconscious sigh; and so completely did she appear absorbed in the new idea thus presented to her, that all recollection of the former subjects of their

conversation had faded from her mind. Colonel Onslow resumed, and the recollection came back again.

"Well, Henrietta, we should be thinking of returning to the breakfast-room: your mother will be expecting us;—but I have one or two things to say to you still. Your cousin Amelia is severely indisposed. These are topics on which we cannot talk openly; but I will say to you who love her, that she met, I believe, with much to agitate her last night in an interview that took place between her and Sir Francis. It would be as much against every kind feeling, as it would be against every sentiment of honour, for you to encourage and approve a man who has acted unworthily by your cousin, nor do I suppose you could be capable of such conduct. In this belief, this confidence, I feel that it must be easy for you to determine that Sir Francis Leslie shall never be nearer or dearer to you than he is at present. As your guardian I could never give my consent to such

a marriage; it is better, therefore, that it should never be asked for."

"Much, much better," said Henrietta, breathing freely: "but mamma! what can I say to mamma?"

"Leave that to me, Henrietta. Now let us go," and once again he kissed her.

In the hall they parted. Henrietta ran up stairs to her bed-chamber — Colonel Onslow proceeded to the parlour. He found Mrs. Cavendish alone. — "Why, how is this? Where is Sir Francis?"

"He has gone out to make a call in the neighbourhood," said Mrs. Cavendish. "I am so glad you have come back, for I have such an extraordinary thing to tell you."

"Indeed!" said Colonel Onslow, with a smile, and he took his old seat on the sofa.

"I never was so astonished in my life. I could not have believed it; but it must be true."

"What must be true?"

"My uncle has just left me."

"Is that extraordinary?" asked Colonel Onslow, gaily.

"Ah! your surprise is to come. What do you think he came to me for?"

"Upon my honour, I cannot guess."

"Why, to entreat me to reconcile Henrietta and Sir Francis?"

"Reconcile Henrietta and Sir Francis! I did not know that they had quarrelled; and what is more, I did not know they stood in that relation to each other in which it was likely, or to be expected, that they should quarrel."

Mrs. Cavendish did not exactly relish this remark: there was a grave raillery about it displeasing to her, and it was made in a tone something between seriousness and mockery, which, coming from him, was any thing but amusing. She answered him, therefore, with coolness: "Such a thing was possible, however; but what amazes me is, that Henrietta, who is all candour, should have told me nothing about it."

"That is extraordinary, certainly," said Colonel Onslow; "so extraordinary, that I am convinced there is some misunderstanding here. I have not the slightest idea that Henrietta has been, is, or ever will be, attached to Sir Francis."

"Then pray, Colonel Onslow," said Mrs. Cavendish with quickness, "why did you think it necessary to put me on my guard so long ago?"

"Come, come," said Onslow, "no cross-questioning: if you are to ask me to account for all my past actions, you will have enough to do, and I too much. Heaven knows if I can account for my present ones!" and he laughed as he looked at her.

"Ah!" said she suddenly, "this is just the way you always contrive to puzzle me when I am in the full career of conversation. What was I talking of? O, about Henrietta. Well, I assure you, and you may believe it just as you like or not, that Mr. Stanhope has been reporting to me the subject of a convers-

ation which he has had with Sir Francis Leslie, regarding his attachment to Henrietta."

"His attachment to Henrietta! He had the grace not to confess it, at least?"

"Not at all. On the contrary, he confessed it over and over again; said he had paid his addresses, but——"

"But what?" said Colonel Onslow, with a look of astonishment.

"O, it is rather a long story altogether. But the fact is, he was in despair,—they had quarrelled."

"Quarrelled! Why, surely, Mrs. Cavendish, you do not forget that they were sitting here in perfect peace and quietness half an hour ago!"

"Well, that is just what I cannot make out."

"Nor I neither. It is evident, from what you say, that Mr. Stanhope has taken up some notion on the subject; but it is just as evident that it is a wrong one."

"A wrong one, Colonel Onslow?

Certainly, as I told you when you came in, I was very much astonished; but that was because I thought Henrietta would have told me every thing as it happened; not because it seems to me so very extraordinary that Sir Francis should be attached to her."

"Mrs. Cavendish!" said Colonel Onslow, in an accent which conveyed more of censure than of surprise.

As nothing was offered by her in reply to the exclamation, he went on:—

"You may remember, perhaps, that when we had a conversation on this subject some time since, you told me, in answer to my very natural suspicion, that those eternal visits would end in something, after all, 'that of course it was out of the question.'"

"And so I thought then, or most assuredly I should not have said so—especially to you. How could I have an idea that he would break through his engagement? An engagement contracted

towards a person whom he loved so tenderly!"

"You have not reflected, perhaps," said Colonel Onslow, "that, supposing it possible Sir Francis should voluntarily renounce an alliance, which would do honour to any man, and presume to offer his hand to Henrietta, if in her name, and for her you accepted him, you would alienate Mr. Cavendish for ever?"

Mrs. Cavendish remained silent.

"You have, perhaps, not considered, either, that he who trifles with the affections of one woman is not the most likely person in the world to make another woman happy? And, more than all, it seems to me you have forgotten that by lending your influence, and your sanction, for we can countenance silently as well as openly, to this disgraceful business, you are acting against that delicate sense of right and wrong which God has given to all of us, and are rendering yourself accountable to your conscience and to Him."

Mrs. Cavendish coloured — and her lip quivered painfully. "This is not kind, Colonel Onslow;" and her agitation compelled her to be silent.

Onslow was touched by the agitation. It brought back to him the engrossing images of the past. He took her hand in one of his — he pressed it fervently — and with the other he touched and half drew her nearer to him — "Constantia!" At the sound of that name from him, she looked up suddenly. He checked himself forcibly, and continued — "We must try to think of what we were talking of just now. Forgive me, in the first place, for having ventured either to advise or to blame."

"I like you to advise me. I know I want advice; but — but — you had not always that determined manner with you."

"Certainly not; but men change as they grow older. You must remember, too, that of late years I have not been much used to female society, — that I

have been accustomed to the exercise of authority, — that I have had the direction of every thing around me, — that I have acquired habits which will cling to me even here. Military power is an absolute sort of thing; and abroad, whether civil or military, we are infinitely more absolute than at home. A bad school this, you will admit, to learn acquiescence in. I have said, that men change, though their sentiments do not; now, if by some unlucky chance or other they insist on carrying these along with them, there must, at least, be an alteration in their manner of feeling them."

Here he paused, and looked with an arch and somewhat doubtful smile at Mrs. Cavendish.

Subduing her confusion with effort, she said, "But you have not kept your promise: we were to come to some conclusion about this unexpected intelligence of Mr. Stanhope. He insisted that Sir Francis had been accepted, and then dismissed, — and seemed amazed, to the ut-

most degree, that I knew nothing about it."

"But you told him, I suppose, that Sir Francis was imagined by every one to be on the eve of marriage with Amelia?"

"No — I did not tell him that. There was no use in it, you know."

Colonel Onslow looked grave. "There is such a mass of contradictions here, that, upon my honour, I cannot find my way through them. One plan occurs to me, the simplest and the best, for ascertaining the exact truth. Sir Francis dines here, I suppose? He will be alone with me after dinner. I will speak to him on the subject."

"Speak to him! That will be excessively awkward."

"Excessively awkward! How?"

"Oh! not to you, I suppose, as you make up your mind so readily to do so; nor to him, perhaps, all things considered. But, but—it will be very unpleasant for Henrietta."

"I do not see why Henrietta is to know any thing about it."

Mrs. Cavendish paused. "I think, if it could be managed, that Sir Francis should offer his explanation through me....."

"Pardon me, my dear Mrs. Cavendish. If there is any thing awkward in the business, as you seemed to apprehend just now, I should be extremely sorry to throw the burden of it upon you; especially when I have so just a cause for wishing to interfere — and so undeniable a right to do so."

The peremptory tone of Onslow, the expression of his eye, were unanswerable. "Ah," said she, "I see I must yield to you; yet I must protest against this despotism, Colonel Onslow."

Onslow smiled. "You are proving, Mrs. Cavendish, by your humility, that nothing is more graceful than the voluntary abdication of power by women. Yet you know what you are about, after all; for, if you yield in little things, you are

but obtaining the pledge that you will conquer in greater ones."

Saying this, he rose rather hastily. "Come, it is necessary to do something between this and dinner. We are left to our own resources. Will you permit me to draw the chess-table to the fire? I shall be victor, you may depend upon it. You have made me so vain by your condescension, that I set no bounds to my ambition. By the by, I had forgotten one thing. I must request, as an especial favour, that, for the present, you say nothing to Henrietta, either as to this mysterious love-business, or her conversation with me. By to-morrow the interdict shall be removed."

Mrs. Cavendish was meditating a reply; but he moved the chess-table as he spoke, and both were soon apparently absorbed in the combinations of the game.

CHAP. XIII.

" Lend me for a while your patience,
And condescend to hear a young man speak.—"
* * * * * * *
" Thy nobleness of soul obliges me.—
Tell me thy wish: make not my ear
A stranger to thy thoughts." *Cato*

" He wants wit, that wants resolved will
To learn his wit to exchange the bad for better."
The Two Gentlemen of Verona

The clock struck six, and the bell rang for dinner. Perhaps none but Mr. Stanhope passed at that summons along the hall with a step as tranquil, and a mind as composed, as usual. Henrietta took her accustomed seat near him. On her other side sat Colonel Onslow. Sir Francis was seated opposite.

Mr. Stanhope, constitutionally silent, and always doubly embarrassed at a dinner table, scarcely spoke but in reply, except to Henrietta. Colonel Onslow

wore an air of general indifference, and cool politeness, greatly at variance with his manner of the morning. As for Mrs. Cavendish, teazed, if not hurt, at the change, she gave most of her attention to Sir Francis. Colonel Onslow smiled internally. He knew, from past symptoms, and from his own feelings, that her countenance was not with her heart. Mrs. Cavendish was always in the habit of rising very early from table — so early, that even Mr. Stanhope, invalid and water-drinker as he was, never wished her movements hastened. But to-day she continued to sit long after Onslow had imagined she would withdraw; and the more silent he became, the more fluently did Sir Francis lead on the subjects of conversation, as if determined no pause should remind Mrs. Cavendish to retire.

But at length she rose to go. Mr. Stanhope made his retreat at the same moment. Colonel Onslow smiled at Mrs.

Cavendish as she passed to the door — closed it — and returned to the table.

He moved the wine to Sir Francis in silence. Sir Francis was the first to speak; and he began by an eulogium on Mrs. Cavendish. Colonel Onslow joined in the praise — not exactly as if he acquiesced through politeness, but with far less apparent enthusiasm than the original speaker. This did not surprise Sir Francis; for he thought it was natural, that he who felt the greater interest should be the more guarded in his tone. But he undoubtedly did feel astonished, when Colonel Onslow added: "What slaves are we to manner! While thus led captive, we do not always take the trouble of inquiring whether all within is equally faultless. And yet, why should we? It is unpleasant, in some instances, to be undeceived."

Sir Francis smiled. "It will not do to look closely into every thing; but I conceived I was speaking to one so inclined

to give judgment in the lady's favour, that the idea never came across me. Besides, I spoke as I felt: I do admire Mrs. Cavendish excessively."

"And her daughter?" said Onslow. "*What do you say to her daughter?*"

As he said this, he fixed his eyes on Sir Francis. Sir Francis, animated as he had been for the last half hour, either did not observe, or observing, did not understand, or understanding, did not care for the look.

"Her daughter! Who must not admire her?" I am ready to pledge her health in a bumper of claret. Come, let the toast be given by you."

"That is better, certainly," said Onslow quietly. "Her health, then, Sir Francis; and may God give her happiness along with it!"

There was a slight pause. "Would to heaven," added Onslow, feelingly, "that the errors, the sorrows, of human passion could be kept from her path for ever!"

"And why not?" asked Sir Francis, with eagerness.

"If she loves — and must she not love?" said Colonel Onslow.

"Well," said Sir Francis, "and where would be the harm of that?"

"The harm! Possibly a great deal— certainly a little, at least if all love-tales tell true."

"And yet," said Sir Francis, "you will find that those who have been in love once frequently choose to fall in love again."

"Choose! I doubt if there is much choice in the matter. Rather say, that having once been teazed, or tormented, into the circle, they must of necessity come back to the same point again. But a truce to raillery—we were speaking of Henrietta. Happy and proud may be the man who wins her, and may none win her who does not deserve her!"

"Colonel Onslow!" said Sir Francis—and he paused suddenly.

"I am all attention, Sir Francis."

"I know not," resumed Sir Francis, hesitatingly, "whether or not you will consider me justified in alluding to some most unfortunate circumstances in which at present I find myself involved. In cases delicate as this, it is frequently better to suffer in silence; but yet I am urged on to speak, because I plainly perceive that you have received an impression to my disadvantage; and no man will tamely submit to be considered through a medium which misrepresents him, if he dare entertain the honourable hope that a candid explanation on his part will restore him the ground he has lost."

"I thank you, Sir Francis, for ascribing such importance to my good opinion. I cannot refuse the confidence with which it is your wish to favour me; but let me beg of you to consider well, ere you give it. It is possible I may view things in a very different light from that in which you see them; and I should be particularly sorry that any difference of opinion should be the result of a frankness, which it would

ill become me to condemn. To own the truth, I had intended to solicit a conference with you,—I may say on this very subject, and on grounds on which I felt I was entitled to request one. I should probably have opened the business differently from what it may be your intention to do, but that is not of the slightest consequence; and the more you can lay before me, which may bear not so directly on the subject, and which, of course, only as a matter of favour I can hear, the more likely am I to understand you, and the greater will be the obligation under which I shall lie to your candour."

"It is painful, very painful," said Sir Francis, "for me to enter into these details; nor do I feel myself equal to giving them at length.—You dined at Mr. Cavendish's yesterday?"

"I did so."

"You were aware, no doubt, that I called there after dinner."

"I certainly was aware of the circumstance."

"It might be supposed," continued Sir Francis, in a low voice, "that, considering what that visit led to, I should endeavour, instead of speaking of it to another, to banish it from my mind for ever. It is impossible I can thus banish it; and were it possible, I should still feel that it was wiser to mention it, because sooner or later it must be known. All my offences—God knows they are many—will be aggravated. I shall be represented as heartless, unfeeling, dishonourable,—one for women to shun, and men to look down upon."

"Forgive me for interrupting you, Sir Francis; but why are you to suppose that Mr. Cavendish, the very soul of honour, should thus traduce you? His former opinion of you must have been high indeed, since he selected you for the husband of his daughter. Why should he paint you now in colours which he knows to be false, and which you can prove to be so?"

"You will remember," returned Sir

Francis, "that when I implied above I had done nothing contrary to the character of a gentleman, I nevertheless admitted that *in some things I had laid myself open to* blame. It is on these points that Mr. Cavendish will enlarge. I have offended him mortally, and he will neither forgive nor forget it."

"Allow me to remark," said Colonel Onslow, "that I do not imagine Mr. Cavendish to be capable of entertaining, far less of nourishing, an unjust resentment. Undoubtedly, I have no right to inquire farther; yet I must necessarily hesitate in any judgment I may be inclined to form, while ignorant, as far as regards any communication from yourself, of the vantage-ground on which he stands opposed to you."

"As far as regards any communication from myself? Ha! I understand every thing now. But no matter, I will answer your question. I had been guilty, certainly, of great folly,—grievous, mad, all but unpardonable folly. Yet still

there were excuses for me. I was young, liable to be misled by evil counsellors.—You must know perfectly well that I allude to some unlucky losses at play. I had suffered from my folly. I had made a secret vow never to repeat it; and, full of the hope of meeting Amelia, I went to Mr. Cavendish's. She had heard of what had passed—she reproached me bitterly. I offered all that it became me to offer as security for the future,—offered it in perfect sincerity of heart, and with the desperate earnestness of one who sees his happiness hanging on a single word; and I believe, yes, I firmly believe, she would have forgiven all, had I not alluded to a person who I suspect has succeeded me in her affections. The allusion, or rather the request I made concerning him, offended her irreconcileably. Her reply was haughty, cold, irritating, maddening. I could bear no more—we parted."

Here there was a pause; and the deep and earnest feeling which had given

emphasis to every sentence of Sir Francis had had its effect on Colonel Onslow. At all events, he could not look without compassion on the pale agitation which mastered still the features of his companion. He might have erred — he had done so; but his very ingenuousness disarmed rebuke of its sternness, and censure of its calculation. "I am obliged to you, Sir Francis, for this confidence. I can suppose the minor details of the scene of yesterday. In most such scenes there is a want of self-command and presence of mind in each of the parties concerned; and I can conceive this to have been the case both with you and Miss Cavendish. We do not speak wisely and calmly when our feelings have been hurt, and least of all when we happen to be in love at the same time. But have you done nothing to irritate her since? and, above all, was there no other cause of irritation before?"

Sir Francis coloured. Colonel Onslow marked the hesitation that was struggling

on his lip, and awaited patiently the reply.

"I wrote to Mr. Cavendish this morning. Ask him, if you please, to show you the letter. As far as I remember, it was the letter rather of an unhappy than of an angry man; though I will not deny that there might be some show of resentful feeling in it. This is Mr. Cavendish's answer,—my dismissal, Colonel Onslow;" and, with a bitter and indignant smile, Sir Francis handed the letter across the table.

Colonel Onslow read it in silence, and returned it in silence also. At length he said, "I am sorry you have entered into any discussion on this painful subject; I feel for your situation; I feel for you, and with you. Yet it appears to me the evil ought not to have proved so irremediable a one: I cannot conceive, in the first instance, what can have given you cause of jealousy against Miss Cavendish: she was known to be your engaged wife — she acted as became that

character: no man would have dreamed of interfering with your claim. That she should be admired was another affair — a natural homage, this admiration, to her beauty and your taste. If, however, it had entered into her mind to be jealous of you, I should not have felt equally surprised."

The gravity of Colonel Onslow's tone almost deceived Sir Francis, but he felt, on a moment's reflection, that the remark was a sarcastic and not a casual one; and in a quick tone he answered, "She might be jealous of me — all women are inclined to jealousy — when she had no reason for it. I do not see why I should hesitate in affording her reason now."

"Certainly not," replied Colonel Onslow: "the field is open: it is only necessary you start fair. There are other families in England besides the Cavendishes to choose from."

Sir Francis rose from his chair, and paced the room in evident agitation. Colonel Onslow poured out another glass

of wine. "We do not understand each other, Colonel Onslow."

"I am not quite sure of that, Sir Francis. It is easier sometimes to understand others than ourselves. However, let us suppose the case to be as you have stated: it certainly cannot be desirable that we should each continue in this ignorance. Explain your meaning, your motives, your wishes, in short, any thing it is worth your while to explain; and I will explain, on my part, all that it can be worth your while to hear."

"I have been ill used, deceived, betrayed; I have renounced every hope connected with the image of her who has proved herself so different from what I thought her. Where is it most natural I should turn? Is it not to those who have always shown me kindness—who have flattered me by their attention—whom I esteem, and whom I love? Am I to be blamed, am I to be shunned, if I try to change my evil fortune for good? If I tear my mind from thoughts which ha-

rass it, and give it to those which soothe it, am I to be blamed, Colonel Onslow?"

"The question is, Sir Francis, whether, in thus doing, you are not consulting your own happiness at the expence of that of others? At the expence, perhaps — you must excuse the harshness of the expression — of your own honour?"

"My honour! my honour!" and as Sir Francis spoke, the flush of resentment mantled on his cheek. "But I am too hasty — I forget, — let me be calm. Hear me: it is not I who have broken from my engagements, it is Amelia Cavendish: she has given me back my freedom — forced it back on me. How then can my honour be impeached, be tarnished, if — if——"

"Stay," interrupted Colonel Onslow: "I spoke not so much of your honour as regards the present; you have an account to settle with the past."

"How?" exclaimed Sir Francis, and

he stopped suddenly at Colonel Onslow's chair.

"It would be of no avail, even were I invited to do so, reasoning with you now: your thoughts are not your own."

"You are right: they have indeed wandered elsewhere: to one who is all gentleness, all compassion — to Henrietta."

For the space of about a minute there was maintained a deep and restless silence. The expression of Colonel Onslow's countenance was no longer calm; that of Sir Francis varied painfully every moment. At last the former spoke: "I believe I have not misunderstood your allusion. Do you wish my answer to be equally decisive?"

"Certainly, by all means. But stop, I seemed abrupt — I was abrupt. Whatever I may wish eventually, I know that just now, — in fact I did not allude to the present: it is impossible: my own recent engagement, my feelings, the errors I have committed, the desire I have to

atone for them, to merit happiness before I enjoy it; but all I meant, — you must, you do, understand me now."

"It comes to the same thing at last, Sir Francis; and I am sorry that in such a case I must necessarily be arbiter; —sorry, because I would not voluntarily interfere with the secret or professed hopes of any man; yet I trust that now, and always, I shall act in conformity to that strict line of right, which no human being is entitled to step over. It cannot be requisite that I should pain your feelings by any farther explanation of my sentiments."

"This is as I expected," said Sir Francis, after a pause; "and had not circumstances hurried and perplexed me, I should have preferred first feeling my way with Mrs. Cavendish. But," he hesitated, "I have been compelled to speak to you; I hope, therefore, indeed I trust, that you will consider, that but for this confidence on my part, I might have been secretly trying to obtain the favour of Henrietta. I might not have suc-

ceeded, but it is possible I might; and although my destiny would still eventually have lain with you, the triumph would have been no poor one."

"Is it a triumph, Sir Francis, that you could have sought without compunction, and retained without dishonour? Reflect, I beseech you, on this business: if you reflect, you will perceive more clearly than you could by any arguments of mine, how strangely the whole affair would look to the world. It is on this view of the subject that I am the rather inclined to dwell, *because I feel I have no right to intrude* on you my particular opinion as to the intrinsic nature of your actions; and because, suffering as you are at this moment, from what you imagine to have been a want of faith and feeling in Amelia Cavendish, and an act of injustice in her father, it is not likely that any thing I might advance in extenuation of either would be admitted by you."

"As you please, Colonel Onslow," said Sir Francis coldly.

"Well, then, the world would naturally think, when it beheld you turn at once from one cousin to the other, that you had been encouraging beforehand a secret partiality completely at variance with your engagements — that you had purposely offended your first love to be free to offer yourself to the second — that you had forgotten where you ought to have remembered, and remembered where you ought to have forgotten. So much for your own reputation with the world. I leave to your sense of delicacy the natural inference, that as the opinion of the world invariably deals more severely with women than with men, Henrietta — the poor unsuspecting Henrietta — would have had judgment passed on her too. It remains only that I say a word or two of myself. The intimate friend of Mr. Cavendish, I betray the interests of his daughter — the guardian of Henrietta, I grant my sanction to an union which, whatever in other circumstances it might have done, offers in these to endanger

her happiness in the same degree as it compromises her honour."

"You have spoken well and wisely," said Sir Francis, after a short and silent struggle between his feelings and his judgment, "and I thank you. I thank any one who will take the trouble to reason with me, at a time when I cannot reason with myself. But, Colonel Onslow, I entreat you, as you would not throw me back on my own hands, do not press on me too hardly. I ask nothing more than this, that I may not be banished hence, as if my presence were a contamination. I could not bear it — no, before Heaven, I could not!"

"There is no need for this vehemence, Sir Francis. If you will consider for an instant, this house is not mine; I cannot interfere with the guests of Mrs. Cavendish. In what I have done, I have considered only what became me as the guardian of Henrietta; and I feel assured that as a gentleman you will so order your actions, that I shall never be com-

pelled to intrude on your recollection the conversation of to-day. Mrs. Cavendish, I should presume, would soon be made aware of what has passed?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Sir Francis, hastily; "but she will have anticipated the result."

"How? Why?" asked Colonel Onslow.

"She told me as much before dinner."

"Before dinner!" exclaimed Onslow.

The surprise of Colonel Onslow restored Sir Francis to his recollection, and he endeavoured to explain away the unpleasant impression which he perceived had been made on the mind of his auditor. "Yes, I met her in the hall just as she was going up to dress. She told me I was out of spirits, and I hinted what was on my mind. She said something, I scarcely remember what, for we parted almost on the instant; and we did not meet again till we all assembled in the drawing-room."

"But am I to suppose," said Onslow,

gravely, "that your confidence, your apparently voluntary confidence of this evening, was the result of any suggestion of Mrs. Cavendish?"

"Pardon me, Colonel Onslow, a man's actions are his own: let the merit or demerit of mine rest with me."

Onslow bowed. — "We will adjourn, if you please, to the drawing-room." Saying this, he moved towards the door.

"One moment," exclaimed Sir Francis, "only one moment. If I understood you aright, in an allusion you made during our conversation, you have had some communication with Mr. Cavendish?"

"I called in Hill-Street this morning."

Sir Francis paused. — "And you saw Mr. Cavendish?"

"I did."

"Did — did — you see — Amelia?"

"I did not see Miss Cavendish" — Onslow hesitated a moment; but he thought that candour in this case, as in most others, was best — "She was confined to her apartment by indisposition."

"Indisposition? You do not mean that she was ill, seriously ill?"

It was Onslow's wish to state at once the truth, and yet in such a manner as to shelter the proud delicacy which he felt must be a reigning sentiment in the mind of Amelia. — "As far as I could understand from Mr. Cavendish, she caught cold while at Wimbledon yesterday: it is not impossible that agitation, flurry, may have increased her liability to indisposition. She was attending, perhaps, too much to other things, when she ought to have been quiet and taking care of herself. She looked extremely ill during dinner. Lord De Beauvoir observed it as well as myself."

"Pardon my importunity — but you will pardon it. Did you understand that her illness was alarming?"

"A physician had been attending her, I know.

"A physician! — Good God! Then she must be ill, indeed! If I had known this! but Cavendish did not even hint

it in his letter. Ill! and I — I dare not even send to make inquiry. Was ever man so tortured?"

Colonel Onslow thought it better, at this period, to leave Sir Francis to his reflections; and he accordingly retired.

The reflections of Sir Francis were any thing but agreeable. He was in one of those predicaments in which it is impossible to move either to the right or to the left without becoming farther entangled; yet if he stood still circumstances would not, and to pause seemed more embarrassing than to act. His pride and his vanity had been hurt by the decision he had drawn forth from Colonel Onslow; but his feelings were wounded far more deeply by the information he had received from him of the illness of Amelia. So painfully did this impression rest on his mind, that the former part of their conference was comparatively forgotten: he felt he had been too precipitate; and while, in the course of his calmer reasoning, he deprecated the resentful issue of the storm

of passion that had bewildered him, it seemed to him as if his better angel had spoken to him by Colonel Onslow. Yet still, although marshalled to a retreat, and while acknowledging that it might have been folly, and worse than folly, to press on, he felt that the entrance was barred against him, of the straighter road he had left. Now came on him the sudden sentiment, that if he had been injured he had, at least, himself not been guiltless; for when events compel us to pause in the full career of action, it is astonishing how clearly we can discern in the moment things we had not leisure to think of before. With this sentiment of self-reproach came a feeling of regret for the past — the irretrievable past — that magic round of recollections — that dream, as of a world in which we live not now — that wilderness of shadows — that kingdom of thoughts departed, of scenes vanished into nothing.

On one thing only could Sir Francis, at this moment, resolve — an immediate

return to London: he felt an insuperable objection to join the company in the drawing-room. Taking, therefore, a note of invitation from his pocket, he traced on its back a few hasty lines of apology in pencil to Mrs. Cavendish, promising to write at length on the morrow. He then rang the bell, ordered his horse, and desired the note might be given as directed. It was delivered as he rode off from the door.

Mrs. Cavendish had scarcely expected that he would seek them after dinner; but she could gather no hint of what had passed, either from the countenance or words of Colonel Onslow. When, however, he bade her farewell, there was something, both in his look and manner, that she did not like. She tried to fathom it, but she could not; and she thought of it over and over again when she retired to her chamber.

CHAP. XIV.

"—— But reason with the fellow, ——
Lest you should chance to whip your information,
And beat the messenger who bids beware
Of what is to be dreaded."

Coriolanus

"Hast thou not charg'd me? — Speak
Thou know'st I have
* * * * * *
The only boon I begg'd was this fair combat.'
Fight —— that's all thy choice"

Conquest of Grenada.

It was on the evening of the following day that Captain Bennet made his appearance before a person whom he professed to esteem highly; but who, it is probable, did not return the compliment. "News! news! Montague," cried he on entering, "such news! Now, were I fortune-teller and knave — they go together, you know — so, in all due course of argument, as I am not the first, it is impossible I can be the second — but were I fortune-teller, I would claim such a golden bribe, Mon-

tague, ere I would deliver up my intelligence, that, if you had any prudence in you, you would prefer coming on your fortune blindfold; but I am so confoundedly good-natured, it must out. In the first place, it is all off between our friend the baronet and the fair object of your adoration."

"Off! I know you by this time, Bennet! I give you credit for your invention; and yet, upon my honour, it was scarcely worth your while to spend your eloquence in preparing me for a joke like this. Have a care! I shall pay you off some day or other."

Bennet, happening at this moment to be very much in earnest, could by no means sit silent under such an impeachment of his veracity. He insisted that all attention, and, what was more, that all credit, should be given him; and proceeded circumstantially to relate his interview of the preceding morning with Sir Francis. He added, that at ten in the evening, as he was just crossing from

his lodgings in Bury-Street, St. James's, a horseman rode suddenly against him: that the stranger instantly checked his horse, and apologised for the accident. "Guess my surprise, Montague! Who should he prove to be but Leslie! — We both stared at the oddness of the encounter. I asked him where he was going. 'Home to bed:' as short a reply as any poor soldier could be honoured with. 'Come, come,' said I, 'you don't escape me in this manner. Home to bed, at this hour! Riding through London post haste like a highwayman — and beginning, by knocking down people before you rob them!' However, Montague, not to keep you in suspense, I prevailed on him to dismount, and walk into my lodgings. He threw himself into a chair — said he was fagged to death — and looked most wretchedly. I made my fellow set brandy and water on the table — and I insisted on his taking some. At first he was obstinate in his refusal, and absolutely sullen, but I gained my

point: and he made good the old aphorism, 'the first step is the only difficulty.' He filled the tumbler a second and third time. Then he began to talk. Now, to keep to the simple truth, I must own, I could not make out precisely what he had been about at Wimbledon, though I shrewdly suspect he has been playing a double game; because, hang the fellow's pride! he did not choose to tell me. But he had dined there, it appears, with Colonel Onslow; and, timing my observations judiciously and so on, I perceived that something out of the common had passed between them. He seemed ruffled in the extreme when referring to him, and changed the subject immediately. It appeared to me I might elicit something farther, by an allusion to the ladies; and angry enough I made him in all conscience. Shifting my ground, I then told him that perhaps he would rather hear of another Miss Cavendish — and I had better have been silent. He lost all command of himself.

I do not pretend to remember one half of what he said; but he swore he was ruined with her past redemption — that she was ill — dying; and then, starting up, he exclaimed, 'God knows,—she may be dead!' After that, he sunk into his chair like one resolved to die too — his head falling on the table — and left me standing like a fool looking at him! I did all I could to rouse him from this stupor. I asked him if I could be of any service to him — if there was any explanation he wished to make....."

"Stay, Bennet, — not so fast. I cannot comprehend how you can be so anxious to serve Sir Francis and me at the same time—having settled it in your own mind, that our interests must clash the one with the other?"

"Ay, there it is," said Bennet, laughing. "That is my extreme good nature; but come, this is the state of the case: Sir Francis said it was impossible I could be of any service to him — on the contrary, he hinted, most politely, that

I had been the reverse. I was not angry with him, poor fellow! I have never time to be angry with any one; but I made up my mind on the spot, that he should find out I was fit for this sort of campaigning. Well, it was impossible to let him go alone to his hotel: so I escorted him there, through what Shakspeare calls 'the witching time of night'—gave him some good advice, and left him. Now, I must stop to take breath a little."

"I am glad of it with all my heart," said Montague, "for your story has been such a strange one, and so hurried, that I have only just now come to the comprehension of it."

"On my life, Montague, you take the comprehension most apathetically. Here's a lover for you! A new kind of lover—a reasonable one. I like to see this,—it does my very heart good. Well, the case is not as desperate as I imagined."

"Bennet, if I am reasonable, be so also, I conjure you. I have never pleaded

guilty on the score of this same love. I have met your jests as jests; but allowing, for the sake of argument, that there had been a penetrable corner in my heart, do you suppose, that, after what you have just told me, I could be cold, calculating enough, to think of myself? — There is something in your story which raises every feeling of compassion in behalf of Sir Francis. I cannot forget that the man, whose wretched state of mind you have been describing, was once my intimate friend — alienated, indeed, of late; but by circumstances, prejudices, misapprehension — I mean, which excuse even to me the alienation. I cannot forget, I repeat, that I have been his companion, his friend; and, remembering all this, I pity him from the bottom of my soul."

"O, pity him as long as you like," said Bennet: "there is no earthly harm in that; though I have serious doubts whether the gentleman in question, being one of the tenacious and irritable class, would thank you for it. But I suppose this same ho-

nourable pity will not put a veto on your calling in Hill-Street?"

"I suppose not," said Captain Montague, dryly. "I always intended calling there. Miss Cavendish gave me the permission when in Yorkshire."

"Well, if I don't laugh now at fellows who stand so on etiquette! — You put feathers round your sword hilts, that when you move they may not clash and startle the company! Hang me, I had rather have the noise ten times over, than be fidgetted to death every time I touched them in that way! Ceremony — ceremony — the tripping master of good manners — the little deliberating beau — who goes out of the room so softly that nobody misses him! Now, what do you think of me? I have seen Miss Cavendish already — seen her at her father's house; and been most cordially requested to call there as often as it might be agreeable."

"Indeed!" said Montague, in a polite accent of incredulity; but before Ben-

net had time to utter a word in reply, he went on in a very different tone:

"I cannot drive the image of poor Leslie from my mind. Do you know whether he has had any thing else but the business you alluded to, to annoy him?"

"What! you don't think that enough? Treason, downright treason against love, Montague. Any thing else to annoy him! O, ay, the old affair; but nothing to any amount — absolutely nothing — I told him so."

"I should have thought him best able to decide the question himself."

"Pardon me—there you are out; he is not capable of judging for himself at all times. I would have helped him with my cooler head, but he waved me off most gracefully."

"The question is clear, that he has lost money at the gaming-table. It is possible this may have led to the breach between him and Miss Cavendish."

"Very likely,—nothing more likely. I

think he gave me to understand so the other day."

There was here a pause. It was broken by Captain Montague. "What is the name of the hotel where Sir Francis puts up?"

"Now, granting I could recollect it, what service, considering all things, could my information be to you?"

"It seems to me," said Montague quietly, "that I must be the best judge of that: the question is a simple one."

"Simple enough, in faith," said Bennet laughing, "but come, you shall have your way. Gould's? No, not Gould's; that is where I called on Robinson — you know Robinson?"

"Indeed I cannot tell, — I may or may not: the name requires some addition for me to understand whom you are speaking of. However, not that I want to hear it just now," added Montague hastily, seeing Captain Bennet ready to speak: "it is not Gould's, you say?"

"I said it was Gould's! Why, man,

you are in a bewilderment ;— and Robinson, he looks all the better for his marriage — which is more than most men can say."

" But I am not speaking about Robinson ; and you will oblige me infinitely, my dear Bennet, if, just for the present, you would forget to speak of him either : we were talking of Sir Francis Leslie."

" Ay, so we were. Well, his hotel— it is one of the hotels in Albemarle-Street, one on the right, high up. But, upon my soul, I can't remember the name."

" In Albemarle-Street ! then how came he riding down Bury-Street in his way home from Wimbledon ?"

" How indeed !" said Bennet, with a laugh.

" Certainly it was in Bury-Street I met him. I suppose, therefore, he is not in Albemarle-Street. He was there when he was in town before, — that has been the confusion. Ay, I recollect now, he is at Warren's hotel. But one word of counsel, my dear Montague. Don't you in

your Quixotism betray your own cause and me into the bargain. You will make nothing of Leslie, depend upon it. He will not give you credit for your good intentions, if you were to swear to their purity till next Midsummer; and, heaven knows, we are far enough from Midsummer now!" muttered Bennet, as he went and stirred the fire.

Some farther information Captain Montague contrived to gather from his communicative friend, and shortly afterwards they parted.

The former had now leisure to reflect on what he had heard; and pacing the apartment rapidly, and occasionally pausing in the midst of his career, he endeavoured to reason coolly on the past. At first, a feeling of complacency, a sentiment of congratulation, bore witness of man's weakness where the passions are concerned. He felt, that, however he might attempt to qualify it to himself, and however he might succeed in disguising it from others, he loved Amelia

Cavendish. He thought he had forgotten her. How often do we imagine we forget, when circumstances have chilled and bound the current of our love! — but let a breath move over the tide, and it murmurs as before. The heart, listless though it seem, is every moment on the brink of a reaction: it is not to be expected it should be long at peace; and the revival of old feelings is as delicious, and a thousand times more natural and graceful, than the birth of new ones.

Yet though Montague undoubtedly loved Amelia, it was not with that absorbing passion, which, while it ascribes every perfection to, and hopes every happiness from, its object, overlooks, in the hurry of pursuit, ambition, public estimation, honour, all that the great and the rich ones of the world look up to and worship. Perhaps he was too much of a man of fashion to be willing to pay this compliment to any woman; certainly he was too much a man of honour to sacrifice the realities of good faith, and the

obligations of uncompromising principle, to the illusions of a fluctuating though enticing dream. It was necessary that he should ascertain precisely the ground on which he stood. He had been the companion of Sir Francis in his joyous hours, his hours of happy expectation; it became him not to take hasty and secret advantage either of his faults or his misfortunes. There was a time, as the wise man said, for all things, and there was a manner in accordance with the time. If he were selfish enough to step forward now, his words, his actions, every thing must be cautious, deliberative, and calm. No: it was better, far better, reasoning even on the side of his attachment, that he should wait till he could start and go on with honour. Besides, he was full at this time of those kindly feelings which spring up in the first sunshine of prosperity, however they may wither in its day beam. He felt it was beneath him to turn the advantages which fortune had lent him to an unworthy use,

and he shrunk from the idea of advancing to happiness by a road which bore witness to the retreating footsteps of another; he wished to owe nothing to the influence of resentment. It has been said that Captain Montague was vain; but his vanity was at least of that higher kind, which, arising as it does from a sense of personal superiority and a consciousness of influence over others, disposes the possessor so to bear himself as not to derogate from what he conceives due to his superiority, or to hazard for an instant the existence of that influence which is become as it were a portion of the atmosphere he moves in.

Thus ran the train of Montague's reflections while persuading himself that if he acquiesced in the events that were making for him, he must do so passively. But the feeling that had been excited in his breast for Sir Francis, was not merely one of sympathy, it bore the higher attributes of generosity. He could decide on nothing till he had seen him; and on

this part of the subject he did not trust himself to dwell. He made no secret promise; for such promises are broken too easily; and he wished not to draw back from one made even to himself. "But see him I must," said he mentally: "it is not fit he should be left alone with these accumulated sources of misery upon him. I know his impatience, his irritability of temper, the violence of his passions. I may be the means of saving him from despair — death. I have the power to be of service to him now: not a moment must be lost."

To Regent-Street therefore he went without delay. He considered while on his road thither, that he was still on such terms with Sir Francis, that a visit from him, although it might possibly not be most acceptable, could yet not be regarded as intrusive; and he was glad of this, because he wished the commencement of the interview to have nothing formal in it. Every thing would go on smoothly if it went on naturally.

He arrived at the hotel, and was informed that Sir Francis was not at home. Prepared for this denial, he desired the waiter to inform Sir Francis, that the gentleman who had called was on the point of leaving London, and was particularly anxious to see him ere doing so.

When this message was delivered to Sir Francis, the first idea that crossed his mind was that the visitor was Colonel Onslow; but then it was strange he should not give his name; or it might be — could it be? — Mr. Cavendish, who he knew was going soon into Devonshire.

"Beg the gentleman to walk up," said he, after a pause, and in no small anxiety he waited the approach of his visitor. His astonishment may be imagined when the door opened, and Captain Montague appeared.

"Captain Montague!" and Sir Francis actually started; for the last few days had so completely interrupted the ordinary tenor of his thoughts and actions, that he could no longer lay claim to that cautious

self-possession which imposes on the world, even when the heart can impose no longer on itself. — "Captain Montague!" The tone, the look, the action, were enough. Montague saw, on the instant, that something had occurred, since they had last met, to irritate to excess against him the jealous distrust of Sir Francis; but beyond this simple conviction all was dark and inexplicable. Hurt and irritated in his turn, for he felt the injustice of the sentiment, he said — "You seem surprised to see me, Sir Francis. I trust my visit is not an inopportune one; but I am just about to start for Hertfordshire; I heard you were in town, and I called."

"I am extremely happy," Sir Francis began, with an air of mock dignity, "most happy and honoured in having been thus sought out. But I forgot; I ought to offer you my congratulations on your accession of fortune. I beg you will receive them, Captain Montague; they are fully as sincere as any compli-

ments it has been my lot to receive of late," and Sir Francis made a low and ceremonious bow.

"If the compliments I am to receive on what the world will style my good fortune," said Captain Montague coolly, "are to be merely those of ceremony, it is not to be supposed I shall trouble myself in ascertaining the exact measure of their sincerity. I know the world pretty well by this time,—its versatility, its emptiness. I know that its friends of to-day are the enemies of to-morrow; yet wherever I feel I have done nothing to deserve the enmity, my pride will counsel me to pass on and forget it."

"Pride, ay, pride," said Sir Francis, as if arguing the point with himself: "the watch-word of the rich and the happy. They will not bend: why should they? Their course lies on higher ground. Pride—jealous, selfish, unchristian pride!—a fitting counsellor!—And sometimes it can condescend too, and,

stealing upon our solitude, wither our very hearts with its intolerable smiles."

It was impossible that Montague could affect any longer to be in doubt of the sentiments of Sir Francis. For an instant or two, however, he was silent. The generous feelings of his nature struggled with his angry ones. In some degree they obtained the mastery, and he spoke: —

"Sir Francis, — pshaw! this will not do. We did not speak in such set phrases to each other some months ago; and for the life of me I do not know why we are to speak in this manner now."

"But I know, Captain Montague. I am not the slave of fair words. Fair words are well enough when they go along with honourable actions; but——"

"Take care, Leslie, — take care, for God's sake! I do not wish to quarrel with you. I am calm, — I am striving to be calm, — I am on my guard; but beyond a certain point I shall not be able to bear

with you. Do not press beyond it. Remember we have been friends."

"Remember we have been friends! Ay, that counsel comes well from you, Captain Montague. We all know that there are cases in which friends have it in their power to commit the deepest injuries. But I must follow your advice, I suppose: we are not to quarrel. Therefore, mark me, I said —'have it in their power.' I do not stand in the place of your own conscience, Captain Montague. I accuse you of nothing — I have done," and with a forced and death-like effort at composure, Sir Francis turned and walked away.

Montague followed him rapidly.—"Sir Francis!" Sir Francis stopped short; and as they stood opposed to each other, it would have been difficult to decide which countenance bore deeper witness to the struggle within. The expression of each was different in character, but, whatever might have been the judgment of a spectator, the parties themselves perfectly un-

derstood one another. — "Leslie, you will explain yourself."

"Ha! — has it *come to this?* I thank you that you will let me breathe freely again. This now is open, honest, honourable enmity;" and Sir Francis laughed bitterly.

"I do not envy you your talent of merriment at such a moment as this," said Montague. "For me, I cannot consider it a subject of congratulation, the having lost a friend; but it appears that I have lost him; nay, more than this, that he has become my decided, my unforgiving enemy. In such a light I must learn to look on him; and I do not simply ask, I demand imperatively, that he shall explain the full meaning of those insinuations he has presumed to level against me; and which it is certain I will answer, if requisite, equally in life as in death."

There was something in the collected steadiness of Captain Montague's air and speech which operated in restoring the

self-possession of Sir Francis. But with this self-possession there came not either the power to forbear, or the wish to do so. He was sensible of the same resentment, although he prepared to express it differently: — "I have been somewhat intemperate in language, and I confess this, Captain Montague, not that the confession may be received in the light of an apology — it is impossible, in the circumstances in which we stand, that such should be offered by me to you; but I confess it, because I am conscious that I forgot, in the tumult of my feelings, what was owing to myself; and I would not have you or any man suppose I do not know the bearing that befits me."

"I am glad, for your own sake, Sir Francis, that you are able to meet this subject with comparative coolness. Unfortunately, it can matter little to me now, in what terms you may think proper to allude to your causes of irritation. You have offended every honourable, you have alienated every friendly feeling. It is with

sentiments I would rather not express, that I stand ready to hear what you may be pleased to say."

"Have patience, Captain Montague: you shall be satisfied." Sir Francis, after this commencement, paused; for he was now, for the first time, conscious that he had no authenticated fact to bring up in array against his rival. In the hurry of emotion, he had overlooked all this: he had been convinced, indeed, that Montague had undermined him in the favour of Amelia; and he had suspected, since his interview in Hill-Street, that more had passed when they were all in Yorkshire, than at the time, even with his jealous apprehension at work, he had been able to detect. He had persuaded himself also, that Amelia had been, at first sight, attracted by Captain Montague; and that, aware of his admiration, and allured by his recent acquisition of fortune, she had cast off, as the first step towards the accomplishment of her views, her former lover. Still this last idea, the

most irritating of all, impeached neither the character nor the conduct of his former friend; and if there had been much to excite and nourish the secret feeling of resentment, there had been nothing to authorise the unmeasured vehemence with which he had betrayed it. Sir Francis acknowledged this to himself; but a principle of false shame impelled him to stifle the reflections that had come upon him; and, conceiving it necessary to go on, he the more readily yielded to the influence of that sore and angry feeling, which repeated to him again, that, although not injured openly, he had still been injured. — "You are aware," he began, "when I invited you into Yorkshire, I believe you were aware of my engagement with Miss Cavendish?"

"I am sorry you should trouble yourself to ask the question: you must know very well that I was aware of it. I was at that time in the habits of familiar intimacy with you; you had often spoken to me of Miss Cavendish in terms, — in

such terms, in short, as I could not misunderstand. But had this not been the case, my own observation, the common rumour of the world, would have told me the same thing."

"You confess this: you confess to have known of our engagement: — and what was your conduct afterwards?"

"Such as it always has been — such as, I trust, it always will be, — and such as, I defy you to prove otherwise, — that of a man of honour."

"But we have heard," said Sir Francis with a sardonic smile, "that all stratagems are fair in love."

"I will thank you, in the first place, Sir Francis, to prove that I was in love."

"The task cannot, I should presume, be a very agreeable one to me, nor do I care to take the trouble to do so. The shortest way of deciding the question is the best — I challenge you to deny the fact."

"And if I deny it?"

"No, you will not, you cannot, you dare not deny it. Yes, dare not; for foe, bitter foe, as I have proved, and must prove myself, I am convinced that your word will not be lent to sanction any thing but truth."

"And if I admit it? Does it even then necessarily follow that I must have set up a claim as insignificant as mine, against one which had every sanction to make it binding:—time—the approbation of parents—mutual affection?" and Montague hesitated.

"Mock me not, Montague: I cannot bear it. Mutual affection!—It might have been so once; I suppose it was so. The darker, then, that conspiracy which destroyed it. Yes, I accuse you of having done this, of having done it secretly. You knew that women were caught that way, and you tried it. You did not pledge yourself openly; you kept to the letter of the world's honour. The world will not condemn you; but it is possible to violate in secret every tie of friend-

ship — every obligation of a purer honour. You have betrayed me long ago. I knew this, I felt this. You had done your part; and it is not to be supposed I could look on and say nothing. She too declared she had her causes of complaint. There is an end of it all now, however, and I scorn to speak of it. But indignation, resentment, must they not be mine? must they not guide, must they not impel me? And yet in this moment, this very moment, when I was unfit for any company but my own miserable thoughts, you — you, who of all men might have had the delicacy to stand aloof, — have forced yourself on my presence to — to——"

"Gracious God, what madness! It is impossible to reason with this man," said Montague, involuntarily; and then, the sense of personal indignity combating his sentiment of painful surprise, he added, the colour mounting to his brow, "Sir Francis, we must meet and settle this elsewhere. I disdain to reply to accusa-

tions made in the spirit in which you have made them. I beg you only to remember that you have not proved one of them. With respect to my visit here, I did not come to insult you. I came, on the contrary, because I heard you were ill at ease, alone, and desperate. I came, conscious that I had done you no wrong, and with the hope that I might do you good. Farther than this, I do not choose to say. I now take my departure. You will hear from me in an hour or two." Saying thus, Montague hastened to the door. Sir Francis stood with the air of one whose every feeling had been petrified, but bearing still the evidence of stormy passion; like a gush of water, which, freezing in its fall, hangs with its hoary icicles motionless, though disordered, in the air.

It is said there is sympathy between lovers; but in the instance of Sir Francis and Amelia it failed a little just now; for the latter was rapidly shaking off the indisposition that had overpowered her.

Her mind had become calmer, her countenance more composed. It had seemed to her that some effort would necessarily be made by Sir Francis towards a reconciliation. It might be doubtful how she should receive it; but still she was anxious it should be made. The idea itself gave occupation to her mind; and, totally ignorant as she was of the letter of Sir Francis to her father, and the reply it had called forth, she anxiously listened to every knock at the hall door, and glanced her eye tremulously over each letter and note that was presented to Mr. Cavendish. But her sphere of observation was necessarily limited, while she continued confined to her apartment; and it was this consciousness that induced her to struggle against the remains of illness with such effect, that on the evening of the day recorded she was enabled to insist on descending to the drawing-room.

Mr. Cavendish was delighted to behold her down stairs once more; and, being particularly anxious to guard her mind

from dwelling on any thing connected with Sir Francis, he descanted on the literature of the day, alluded to the morning news, and said that town was so intolerably dull, it was absolutely necessary, in self-defence, that they should start for Devonshire as soon as possible. It was agreed, at length, that they should leave London at the end of the following week. Amelia would have postponed the day of departure, if possible; but she had felt it was fit she should acquiesce, and she again confessed that she was much better.

"I thank God, my child, that you are so. I shall not take you to Wimbledon again in a hurry, if you amuse yourself with walking in the snow.—Well, we will not talk of the past."

"The past!—Oh no!" said Amelia, with a sigh. Rousing herself suddenly, she said, "Did you not tell me Colonel Onslow was going with Lord De Beauvoir into Northumberland?"

"Yes: they start to-morrow. So Lord De Beauvoir mentioned when I met him

this morning. We are all going different ways, I think. Such meetings as there will be in the spring! What will you wager me, Amelia, that Mrs. Cavendish marries the Colonel when he comes back again?"

"She had better not let him go," said Amelia, with another sigh, though not as audible as the former one. "Well, let us have the wager: these things are so amusing! What shall it be, papa? What shall it be, Harry?"

"Don't you remember, Amelia, what you longed so to have in your own private possession the last time you were in the library?"

"Ah! I recollect—the beautiful little alabaster bust of Cæsar. And what shall I give on my side?"

"Oh, as for that," said Mr. Cavendish, laughing, "I have my fancies too. You must know, I particularly admire that elegant cup with the scroll of gold leaves, that you drank your tea out of this morning."

That cup!—any thing but that cup, papa," said Amelia, colouring; and her agitation reminded him, at once, that it had been the gift of Sir Francis. The smile left his lip; yet it was impossible he should consent to wear a frown in the presence of his darling child, and he re-resumed hastily the subject he had dropped. "Well, we shall not see Onslow again till March, unless we can get him down to Devonshire. There now is a man worth statesmen and philosophers, with their diplomacy and their meditations into the bargain. Not but he has seen something of state machinery too. Governments are good places for examining it in detail; and as for philosophy, heaven knows, he has had enough to try it in his time, and to all appearance he will have something more to try it, ere he leaves this complicated world of ours."

At this instant the drawing-room door was opened, and Colonel Onslow was announced.

"My dear Cavendish," he exclaimed, on entering,—but he caught sight of Amelia, started, and paused. It was evident, on a single glance, that Onslow had met with some event which had much disturbed him. Mr. Cavendish, influenced by the train of associations which had been latest present to his mind, thought of his sister-in-law. Henry looked at Amelia, and he perceived that every recently-subdued feeling had sprung up to painful life; that she gazed, indeed, on Colonel Onslow, but that she was thinking of Sir Francis.

"For Heaven's sake, Onslow, what has happened?" said Mr. Cavendish, hastily. "All is well at Wimbledon, I hope?"

"Yes, yes. I am a discourteous visitor, am I not," said Onslow, with a forced smile, and bowing to Amelia, "to come and startle you all by my looks, instead of congratulating you on yours?—Miss Cavendish, I am happy to see you so much better. The fact is, I have had a

harassing and fatiguing day altogether; and I have had some unpleasant business pressing on my attention, which I am afraid has rendered me unfit for enjoying your society as I ought to do. To speak candidly, I have come to consult my friend here, than whom I know not a better counsellor."

"What! You have learnt to flatter of late? Yet I should not have thought that was required at Wimbledon, eh, Onslow?"

Onslow did not hear the question. He was lost in thought; and his absence of mind was observed by Mr. Cavendish, whose manner changed instantly. "Come with me to the library, Onslow;" and he snatched up one of the massive candlesticks from the table, and motioned for Onslow to pass on. The door was left open, in the haste of their departure. Henry rose to close it. "Stop, Harry; don't shut the door. I hear their footsteps—I hear them whisper, as they pass down the staircase. Ah! they have

got to the library. Henry, dear Henry, what can be the matter? Now close the door: there is some one on the stairs. I cannot help it. These are foolish fears, as foolish as they are dreadful;"—and the tears gushed from her eyes. She composed herself suddenly, and a short conference took place between the brother and sister. The hall door was at length gently closed, and Mr. Cavendish returned to the drawing-room alone. On his countenance no sign of emotion was visible, and whether this appearance of tranquillity allayed the agitation of Amelia, or whether the habitual reverence which was mingled with her filial love made her feel reluctant to intrude upon her father's unconfided subjects of meditation, certain it was, that she alluded not once to the visit of Colonel Onslow.

Mr. Cavendish watched, through the evening, every change in her countenance and manner, and the tone of her voice. He counselled her to retire early

to her chamber, kissed her with tenderness as they parted, shook his son by the hand, and went instantly down stairs About half an hour after, he left the house.

CHAP. XV.

"—— I was so happy, so beloved,
Fate could not ruin me, till I took pains,
And work'd against my fortune."

All for Love

"I thought the meaning of all rational men
Should still be gather'd out of their discourse."

Theodosius

"*Since doubting things go ill often hurts more*
Than to be sure they do. .discover to me
What both you spur and stop"

Cymbeline

At the corner of Bruton Street Mr. Cavendish found Colonel Onslow. Hastily putting his arm in his, they proceeded across Bond-Street to Conduit-Street. "For once the noble Captain has done some good," said Onslow; "but he may reconcile himself to the fact, since he did it unintentionally."

To explain the allusion of Colonel Onslow, it is necessary to go back a little. At two o'clock in the afternoon Sir

Francis had received a challenge from Captain Montague.

"It matters not," said the former, "this or any thing now. — I am tired of the world, and the world of me. Every thing has combined to drive me to desperation: it is better to meet death from his hand than my own." At this idea a shuddering chill came over him. "Merciful God! and have I learned thus to think and to feel? I can no longer recognise myself. It is not years that have changed me; it is folly and misfortune. What am I? — What was I last summer only? — that glorious, that beautiful summer! I was in peace, I was happy; I loved her; I was by her side in fields and in gardens, and in woods; the sun shining, the birds singing, heaven and earth mingling with our joy! But why do I think of these things now? The very recollection mocks me. Darkness, nothing but darkness, is round me!"

Again there arose in succession to the mind's eye of Sir Francis a host of

images, harassing, and hateful, and terrible, — a consciousness of folly— a sense of shame, a feeling that he had proved false to the promise of his youth, and that he was about to dare the passage of that awful barrier, at the sound of whose closing there is no repentance. Of such things he thought in the subduing silence of his solitude.

Religion — for careless, gay, and occasionally dissipated as he had been, the instruction of his childhood, and the practice of his youth, had taught him to bow to the ordinances of his God — religion, with her holy piety, her uncompromising rectitude, her attributes of divinity, came forward to contest the empire with worldly honour. He pressed his hand before his eyes, as if he could thus shut out the thoughts that were struggling together in his brain. He felt that there was no medium; that he must yield entirely to the "still small voice" within him, or go forward and perish. "I do not choose my path," said

he, as his clenched hands fell upon the table. "I am urged on by my uncontrollable passions. There will be no forgiveness for me in heaven!"

His purpose once formed, he prepared to make his arrangements — and he immediately thought of Captain Bennet. "I have done with him for all that is just, or honourable, or kind; but this is a fit occasion to employ him. I will ask no better man to stand by me. Besides, accident has made him already acquainted with my state of mind. He will have expected some such catastrophe." With a trembling hand, and a throbbing brow, he then wrote the following hasty note to Captain Bennet: —

"You will scarcely be surprised at the news I send you. You saw last night that I was on the verge of all that was desperate. Only a few hours ago you conceived me to be engaged in a duel — and I denied the charge. Affairs have come to a crisis since then. Be my

second — you wished to have been so. God knows, Bennet, that the man who now addresses you is the most miserable of mortals. I shall bring into the field, against the military skill of my antagonist, a heart bleeding at every pore — a spirit wrung to its very centre. Ask me no particulars. For heaven's sake, do not call on me! I am fit company for no one! Be here at half past seven to-morrow morning. "F. L."

The note soon reached its destination; and great was Bennet's astonishment on its perusal. "Fine work this! I have heard of method in madness; but here is method in mystery. This same irascible friend of mine, while requesting the honour of my company in the scrape into which he has contrived to get himself, does not choose to give me a particle of information as to the origin of the quarrel; nay, conceals from me even the name of his opponent; and, for the furtherance of his candid scheme, refuses to

see me! He must have been mad, mad to his finger's ends, when he wrote to me. I have it though, as sure as fate! His antagonist must be Colonel Onslow. Military skill! Ay, he has enough of it, and of military pride, too;" for Bennet had not forgotten the manner in which his casual remark had been received by Onslow the evening they had met at the theatre.

"Now hang it if this is not too bad! There was Leslie sitting with me for two good hours last night, evidently full of this business, and did not choose to speak one fair word about it! And pray what sort of fellow does he deem me, to think I will do his bidding in the dark? I shall certainly choose to know a little more of this affair ere I embark in it. Not call on him, indeed! I'll pay him off for his reserve. I shall call, instead, on Colonel Onslow. I shall feel my ground step by step. I will not go straight to my mark, as I did with Leslie yesterday morning. That blunder was

of no consequence. A blunder here would be confoundedly awkward — not that I have the slightest doubt in my own mind: the thing is as clear as day. When the business is fairly on the carpet, my wit will be at fault, indeed, if I do not contrive to convince the Colonel of the perfect propriety of the step I have taken. There will be the peculiar circumstances of the case — and the old plea of conciliation — and so on."

As, however, Captain Bennet, to use his own words, was "not to go straight to the mark," it was necessary to find some plausible pretext for calling on Colonel Onslow; and here his genius for manœuvring found itself for some time foiled: at last, he recollected, most opportunely, that he had, two days before, met at a dinner party a gentleman just arrived from the West Indies, who had declared himself to be an intimate friend of Colonel Onslow. This gentleman was an old acquaintance of Captain Bennet: they had been engaged much in conver-

sation together; and the stranger had mentioned, when alluding to some recent transactions in Jamaica, that he had a file of Kingston papers, which he should be most happy to lend Captain Bennet, if he felt inclined for their perusal. Bennet, who cared nothing about Jamaica politics, had not thought of the Jamaica papers from that moment to this: they now suddenly occurred to him; and forming his scheme in the hurry of the moment, he snatched up his hat, and hastened through the increasing fog of a December afternoon, to Half-Moon-Street, where his acquaintance from the West Indies was residing. Fortunately for his plan, he found the West Indian at home, who was really glad to see him. Bennet made a hundred apologies for not having called earlier; said he was afraid that this his first visit must be a flying one; talked of the East Indies and the West; and then came most naturally the question —"By the by, I should be infinitely obliged to you if you could lend me two or three of

the last Kingston papers." The request was instantly complied with, and Bennet, happy in the possession of his credentials, hurried back to Dover-Street. He knocked at the door: a footman made his appearance. — "This is Colonel Onslow's, I believe?" — The man answered in the affirmative. "Be so good as to give these papers to the Colonel with my compliments — Captain Bennet's compliments, — and tell him I thought he might be glad to look over them, as —— You will tell him, if you please, too," said Bennet, beginning in his haste a second sentence before he had finished his first, "that they were brought to England by — stay, if Colonel Onslow is at home, and quite at leisure — it might be better, perhaps, I should see him myself."

"Will you please to walk in, sir, then?" said the footman, receding a step or two from the door.

Captain Bennet apparently hesitated for a moment, — "Eh! — yes — I think so," and he followed the man up stairs·

While yet on the staircase, the drawing-room door opened, and he heard a voice not entirely strange to him say — "At eight to-morrow then, an early hour for December; but these are occasions when we must take the morning by stealth and hastily: I shall be punctual to the moment."

Confirmation!" said Bennet mentally, and on he hurried. The speaker made his appearance: it was Lord De Beauvoir. He stopped on seeing Bennet, whom he did not, however, recollect in the least. Colonel Onslow did recollect him, and was much surprised to see him. He bowed with all necessary courtesy. The bow was returned by Bennet, and he spoke at the same time — "Lord De Beauvoir, I believe? I had the honour of meeting your lordship at Covent Garden theatre some short time since."

"Upon my honour, I beg your pardon, sir," said Lord De Beauvoir, with an air of gay politeness; "I could not recall your features at the moment. It was in

the company of Mrs. Cavendish, I think?"

"It was so, my lord."

"I am sorry," said Lord De Beauvoir, "I am under the necessity of breaking up our second meeting so abruptly; but I have not a moment just now that I can call my own."

Saying this, Lord De Beauvoir shook hands with Colonel Onslow, and bowing *en passant* to Captain Bennet, went down stairs.

"Captain Bennet," said Onslow as he closed the door, "we cannot do better, I think, than draw near the fire. This is bitter weather."

"Really, Colonel Onslow, I can think neither of the weather nor of the fire, till I have explained the reason of my intruding on you thus unexpectedly. The slight introduction that once passed between us was not enough to authorize our acquaintance going farther lengths without mutual consent, whatever might

have been my individual wishes on the subject."

Bennet here stopped: it was new to him to express himself with such cautious courtesy; but he knew, or he thought he knew, the character of Onslow, and it was necessary that the path should be smooth before him.

As for Onslow, he remembered no introduction at all: however, he could do no less than offer a polite reply to a speech so deferential. Bennet went on — "The fact was, I was dining out the other day, and I met among the guests a gentleman who said he had had the pleasure of knowing you very well in the West Indies. He had brought over some papers, giving a full detail of the late disturbances there. It struck us both you might like to read over the accounts at your leisure. I found him surrounded with them when I called on him just now. He was laid up with the gout, and I felt happy in being able to act as his deputy."

"I am extremely obliged both to you and to him;" said Colonel Onslow: "may I beg the favour of the gentleman's name?"

"Wilmot."

"What, John Wilmot!" said Onslow, with an expression on the corner of his lip that Bennet did not exactly like: "so he has come home at last, to use his influence, I presume, for the suppression of the slave trade?"

Bennet had tact enough to see that he stood on delicate ground; and conceiving that the next step forward might be a hazardous one, he drew back with the remark, "I had lost sight of him for years; I knew him a little formerly; he then struck me, as far as one can form an opinion on a casual acquaintance, as an easy, good-humoured fellow."

"I believe he consults his own ease now fully as much as ever he did," said Onslow, with a sort of half smile: "for his good-humour,—the last time I saw him was in circumstances calculated to put

any man's good-humour to flight; but I am glad, most glad, that he has prevailed on himself, or been prevailed on, to quit Jamaica."

Bennet concealed his vexation as well as he could, and while Onslow glanced his eye over the columns of one of the papers, he had time to re-arrange his ideas. "Enough of the planter, at any rate; that is a proscribed subject, as, for aught I know, he himself may have been in his day. No doubt, the jingling of a heavy fine is yet sounding in his ears. — Hang the fellow, and his slaves too! I suppose he chose to assert his supremacy somewhat harshly. That same Lord De Beauvoir was a strict one. Thank Heaven! his lordship walked off as he did. A fine position I should have been in with the governor and the quarter-master-general too!"

The conversation now ran in other channels, and Bennet had almost forgotten the real purpose of his visit, so much had he been occupied by his as-

sumed one, when it was brought suddenly to his recollection by Onslow saying, "I believe you are acquainted with Sir Francis Leslie. Have you seen him lately?"

"I saw him yesterday evening."

"Yesterday evening! Why he dined at Wimbledon. But I forgot: he left it early, — about nine o'clock, I think."

"Precisely: that is, I mean it must have been about nine; for I saw him at ten on his way home. I am sorry to say he appeared very ill and agitated when I met him."

Both Onslow and Bennet were silent for a moment or two. The former felt no inclination to be in the slightest degree confidential with Captain Bennet, yet he was anxious about Sir Francis: he was in fact not without apprehensions on his account, and it was scarcely fair to gather intelligence regarding him, while entrenching himself in a reserve that bore on its face the evidence of distrust. Hardly knowing how to decide

the question, he at length replied, "He was certainly out of spirits when he left Wimbledon."

"Come, my wary Colonel," thought Bennet, "this is rather too cool."—"Out of spirits!" said he, bluntly. "The fact was, he had some very unpleasant subjects pressing on his mind; and, to own the truth, he alluded to circumstances which —which—that mad visit to Wimbledon! I suspected he would go a step too far at last."

"How, Captain Bennet! Sir Francis entered into particulars regarding some peculiar circumstances which had occurred at Wimbledon?"

"Not absolutely into particulars, but the next thing to it: he gave me clearly to understand the unpleasant dilemma he was in; and an unlucky affair we must confess it to be, if we look closely into it."

"I am amazed that he should be thus communicative," said Onslow. "I thought of him more highly — in that respect at least: these are not topics for

every day conversation. If he has no regard for his own honour, he might at least consider the feelings of others. He should not have mentioned a syllable of this, and I cannot understand what infatuation can have impelled him to do so."

Bennet felt displeased that it should be thought derogatory to Sir Francis to have confided his grievances to him. Determined, therefore, that this confidence should be proved to have been rendered almost absolutely necessary by the next step that followed, he hastily added, "he had occasion to write to me to-day on the subject, and I suppose on that account preferred giving me a pretty intelligible hint over-night."

"Occasion to write to you on the subject?"

"Yes, Colonel Onslow; and you must by this time be fully aware why and how he wrote to me."

"Pardon me, Captain Bennet. I am certainly not aware why he should write

to you. How he wrote to you, we had better not discuss. It would be but betraying a confidence which ought to be as sacred as its subject is delicate. I cannot comprehend the thing at all. Unfortunately, my arrangements for to-morrow are such, that no explanation can now take place."

"I do not see that at all, Colonel. The good folks say it is never too late to do well. I am willing to be the mediator in the affair."

"In what affair, sir?" said Onslow, with marked displeasure.

"Why surely, Colonel Onslow, you do not pretend to misunderstand me? I told you Leslie had written to me; but that intimation, it appears, gave offence. I am unwilling to refer to it again."

"Refer to it by all means, sir," said Onslow, impatiently, "if by so doing any light can be thrown upon this extraordinary, this unintelligible business. Sir Francis Leslie having thought fit to write to you, I, as a party concerned, ought,

perhaps, rather to have received with readiness, than rejected, your offered communication. But I was hurt—I was annoyed—I was altogether irritated and amazed. I shall now feel obliged by your going on."

"In plain terms, then, Leslie wrote, and requested me to be his second."

"His second!" exclaimed Onslow;—and the excess of his astonishment kept him silent.

"His second,"— Bennet repeated. "I confess I have not absolutely acceded to the request. These things require some deliberation. You, on your part, will be honourably attended; and if, unluckily, the thing must go on to its termination, there would at least be nothing to find fault with in the arrangements."

Here Captain Bennet paused; and Onslow, in the same moment that he perceived the error into which his visitor had fallen — strange and unaccountable as the error appeared—considered hastily whether, by allowing him to remain in it

for a while, something might not be drawn from it to the advantage of Sir Francis. But his high-minded candour shrunk from the idea even of tacit deception: besides, Captain Bennet stood so far committed, that it was probable he would not know how to draw back, however he might be startled on the first discovery of his mistake. It may be supposed, too, that Onslow allowed something for the influence which a superior mind obtains over an inferior one. Advancing, therefore, hastily to Captain Bennet, he said: "I cannot allow you to continue under a mistake. Till this moment, I knew nothing of the duel. I have had no quarrel with Sir Francis."

"Colonel Onslow!" exclaimed Bennet, actually starting in his amazement, and colouring with mortification. "Do I hear you right?"

"You do; and most happy am I that I can lay my hand on my heart, and say so."

"Allow me, then, to remark," said

Bennet, with an assumption of *hauteur* that proved not at all in accordance with his bustling manner and rapidity of tone, "that I hold myself aggrieved, inasmuch as you yourself have led me on to make this most unlucky communication. You professed yourself perfectly aware that some circumstances had occurred distressing to Sir Francis. You talked of being a party concerned. you alluded to your arrangements of the morrow—nay," added he, in a lighter tone, suddenly recollecting the words of Lord De Beauvoir, "we must both have lost our senses, I think, since we began this discussion. It is impossible but what I must be right. I overheard the appointment made myself—between you and Lord De Beauvoir, I mean. Colonel, I forgive you the *badinage*. Pardon the haste of my expressions. Let us deal openly with one another."

"If I had been guilty of such subterfuge as you first imagined, Captain Bennet, I should have nothing to forgive in

your expressions: they would have been amply warranted. That you could suppose I should be guilty of it, is another affair; and for the utterance of such a supposition, I might indeed consider myself entitled to an apology. But again, I would rather waive the question entirely; for we have both contributed, though most unintentionally, to mislead each other; and as this misapprehension must, in its result, be of material consequence to you, I hope I have candour enough to make the necessary allowances. With respect to any thing I may have said, although it is impossible I can enter into a complete explanation, I give you my word, as a gentleman, that I was thinking of something very different from a duel, while replying to what you told me. In regard to the arrangements between Lord De Beauvoir and myself, they refer merely to our journey into Northumberland."

Captain Bennet bowed low to the explanation thus offered him. Onslow continued — "But you say, Captain Bennet,

Sir Francis wrote to you? I am as much at a loss as ever. I cannot comprehend how this mistake had its rise."

"A mistake there has been, however," said Bennet, — "that is certain. The thing that occurs to me now is, — but, hang it, between men of honour the question is not needed: of course you will be silent as the grave."

"I never give my word lightly, for fear I should keep it reluctantly. I am much interested for Sir Francis."

"I do not suppose the interest you feel for him can be greater than mine."

"It may be of a different kind, however," said Onslow.

"I have had some experience in affairs of honour," replied Bennet; "and there are certain points, you must be aware, Colonel Onslow, which admit of no debate, and I conceive this to be one of them."

"And I conceive, Captain Bennet, that the case in question is of a nature so peculiar — it being rare, indeed, that a

second can labour under the misapprehension you have done, and act upon it — that no ordinary rule, can, I presume, apply here."

"I was not aware," said Bennet, drawing himself up, "that it was customary to make appeal to legal subtleties in affairs of the sword; and least of all did I expect to see this done by a man whose military reputation stands as high as Colonel Onslow's."

"There is something, however," replied Onslow, "to which even military reputation must consent to bow — the voice of conscience."

"But as it does not strike me," replied Bennet, affecting to laugh, "that your conscience is to be loaded with Sir Francis Leslie's sins, I cannot, for the life of me, conjecture why you are to prevent him going on with this affair."

"I do not recollect that I expressed any intention to that effect."

"It is much the same thing, I think," said Bennet; "you refuse to give me your

promise of secrecy, and we all know that duels are not, like the single combats of yore, fought after proclamation made to that effect. But let us not dispute about another man's business: — let us discuss the point calmly."

"I am perfectly calm," said Onslow.

This composure was most annoying to Bennet: he bit his lip, and went on — "Duels are necessary evils."

"That they are evils," replied Onslow, "I am ready to admit; however, there let the matter rest: I am no duellist."

"Let me just ask you one question, Colonel Onslow — what plan would you pursue if any man insulted you?"

"I never yet met with the man who dared to insult me."

"But you might, by accident, fall into the company of fools or madmen —" said Captain Bennet, with a sneer.

"And if I did I should leave it as soon as I had discovered it, and before the discovery was forced upon me. And now let us resume the subject we have

dropped. Captain Bennet, you might confer on me a great obligation. You must feel that, having communicated to me the fact of the intended duel, it can be of little service to make a secret of the circumstances connected with it. As I said before, I am interested for Sir Francis; not that I know much of him personally, but were any thing fatal to occur, the peace of individuals whom I esteem highly would be at stake. I said I knew little of him: still his youth, his pleasant qualities, all plead for him in a case of such awful importance as this. You may rely upon it, I will not idly spread abroad any intelligence I have obtained, or may obtain; I do not suppose that by doing so I should throw the slightest additional honour on Sir Francis. Furthermore, in any plan which I might think it advisable to pursue, I should make it a point to procure your acquiescence."

This concession completely smoothed the ruffled plumes of Captain Bennet. — "Really, Colonel Onslow, as you remark,

there would be no use in being over-scrupulous now, more particularly as I have not been treated very openly by Sir Francis."

"Well, then, you will oblige me?"

"Hang me, if I can. Of course what you are principally anxious for, is to learn the name of Leslie's opponent. Now it is precisely there I am in the dark. I thought I had a clew, and you see where it led me."

In the pause which succeeded this conclusive assertion of Captain Bennet, it occurred all at once to Onslow, that Sir Francis, the evening before, had spoken of a person whom he imagined to have supplanted him in the affections of Amelia. "And you do not know of any one that Sir Francis regards with distrust — with jealousy? You, with all the rest of the world, must have long been aware he was in love. Has no rival interfered with him and his expectations?"

"You have it, Colonel, — you have it! What an idiot was I not to think of this

before! It must be Montague. I have been treated shamefully. Here is Sir Francis engages me to go hoodwinked along with him; and, lo! when he takes off the bandage, who am I to see but my old acquaintance, Montague!" and Bennet walked up and down the room, giving vent to his expressions of anger and resentment.

"What Montague is this you speak of?"

"O the one you know; he who has just come into old Hotham's fortune. He was speaking of you the other day. Ha! I see all clearly now. Montague left me to call on him this morning. I predicted they would quarrel, and they have quarrelled with a vengeance."

At length Onslow succeeded in allaying for a while the irritable feelings of Captain Bennet. The latter, however, remained firm in his determination of withdrawing from the business altogether. — "I shall write to Sir Francis instantly to that effect — I shall endeavour to curb my pen; and

if he complains of the mystery of my despatch, let him bethink himself of the mystery that enveloped his own: he may find a hundred fellows among his acquaintance who will serve his turn just as well. It is morally impossible, after the want of candour on his part, and the discovery made on mine, that I can go with him to the ground; it would be a thing unheard of. You know, Colonel Onslow, it is absolutely impossible."

Colonel Onslow lent his ready acquiescence, both to the arguments and the determination of Captain Bennet; and he felt that his private wishes on the subject went along with his conviction. There could be little doubt but that the supposition regarding Montague was correct; and as Onslow had met him frequently, the plan which presented itself to him had in it not the slightest difficulty. He knew that it would be of no avail to seek an interview with Sir Francis: from him any information he might receive would come distorted through the medium of

ungovernable passion; and on that ungovernable passion also, what impression could he hope to make by argument?

As a matter of necessary deference, Onslow imparted the outline of his proposed plan to Captain Bennet.

"You are perfectly at liberty to do as you please, Colonel Onslow. I apprehend, as things have turned out, that I never was responsible; and I certainly consider myself divested of all responsibility now."

They separated; and as a prior step in the arrangement decided on, Colonel Onslow bent his way to Hill-Street. The object of his visit there was to secure the attendance of Mr. Cavendish with him to Captain Montague's. The request was promptly acceded to; and after a hurried walk Colonel Onslow and Mr. Cavendish found themselves at the door of what had been Mr. Hotham's mansion in George-Street.

CHAP. XVI.

"Forget, forgive, conclude, and be agreed."
King Richard the Second.

"Shall these papers lie like tell-tales?"
Two Gentlemen of Verona

It was with considerable difficulty, difficulty much greater than Montague himself had had to contend with, when he paid his unfortunate visit of the morning, that Mr. Cavendish and Colonel Onslow made good their entrance to the drawing-room in George-Street. No one was in it to receive them, all there looked silent — deserted — comfortless. It was lighted only by the candle that had been hastily placed on the table, by the domestic who had ushered them into its solitude. The draperies of the large windows were partly suspended, partly lying in heaps on the coarsely-covered

couches and ottomans — the mirrors were papered — the floor uncarpeted. The door closed on them with a dull and heavy sound — every thing was in unison with the sombre tone of their ideas. Mr. Cavendish was the first to speak. "How every thing in life speaks to us of change, Onslow! — See the care poor Hotham took of these fine things! He is gone — and the young fellow, his heir, while yet in the midst of his preparations to be at ease, and gay and happy, is called off in his turn to think of danger and death! What if he should refuse to see us?"

"But he must see us," said Onslow, earnestly. "These are not cases in which to stand on ceremony. I am afraid we shall find the offence to have lain with Sir Francis: in that case, I know not what can be done."

"As you love me, Onslow, do not start such a doubt. It would be hard, if succeeding, as I thank Heaven I have done, in almost every thing I have yet

undertaken, I should be foiled here: here, where my child's peace hangs on the issue. Her peace, did I say? Something dearer still. *He* dared to bring the accusation against her first — he whom she had always loved — whom, most unfortunately, she loves still. How he could do this, — do this in her very presence — see her tears, and not pity them, — Onslow! Onslow! how would you have felt had you been her father? What excuse would you admit for such conduct? I guessed, indeed, from Captain Bennet's manner the evening he called, that Captain Montague had shown he was not indifferent to Amelia. Was she to blame for that? But that he should dare to accuse a daughter of mine of renouncing, at once, delicacy, honour — every thing, for the acquaintance of a day, is an offence I cannot easily forget — and which it requires all my Christian charity to pardon. If the injury even ended here! — but it does not. Am

I to have her name mentioned in the public prints — and allusions made to subjects, that none should presume to bring under discussion, but her parent, or her familiar friends? Am I to have her dragged to the brink of the grave by alarm and horror? How shall I be able to keep these things from her? — Impossible. There will be no deceiving her. If they meet, she must know it: and what will be her feelings then? For her feelings, if Leslie fall, I dare not think of them. Onslow! what, in the name of Heaven, can we do? I have thought over our proposed arguments again and again. What sort of man is *Montague*? Had you not better see him first? May he not resent my appearance here? There is no sound of his coming. He will leave the house, depend upon it, and our errand will be useless. My dear Onslow, find him out: he is below, no doubt. I beseech you, Onslow, go."

"If you wish it, I will. Be calm, Cavendish — trust every thing to me." And Onslow left the drawing-room.

On gaining the hall, he perceived the door of the dining-room open, and the room itself was in darkness, except where the ray of the hall lamp pierced its obscurity. "He is not there," thought Onslow, and tracing his way towards the back of the house, he reached a door which was completely closed. He knocked, he received no answer; he knocked again, and at length he heard steps advancing to the door. It was opened to him by Montague. His countenance was very pale; but he saluted Colonel Onslow in a firm tone, and apologised for having so long delayed waiting on him. The table had been hastily cleared of letters and memorandums, for one or two had fallen on the floor; and a pen, yet wet, was lying across the standish.

Montague requested Onslow to be seated. "But I heard you had brought a friend along with you. Had it not been

so, I might have joined you earlier, not being precisely in the mood for paying compliments to strangers just now. Life brings its cares to us all," added he, with a bitter smile.

Onslow, with no farther delay than attended those precautions and conditions he imagined it necessary, in the first instance, to take and to impose, proceeded to inform Montague of the intelligence he had gained — and the manner in which it had been made known to him. Montague heard his relation without a single visible token of surprise, regret, or irritation. He kept his eye fixed steadily on Onslow as he spoke, and his right hand unmoved on the table by which he stood. "I have done," said Onslow, "now with my communication: you may guess with what feelings I received it."

"I suspected something of this," said Montague, "when I heard that you had called. It came on me by a sort of intuition; and your friend, I suppose, is Bennet?"

"It is not Captain Bennet; but, on that subject, more by and by. This is a sad business, Montague."

"An inevitable one, Colonel Onslow — and the less said about it the better."

"I am sorry to hear you say so. These things ought to be fully canvassed first."

"You cannot suspect me," replied Montague, "at least I should hope not, of being one of those hasty, those irritable, those ill-judging men, who, for the sake of a word idly said — a careless action — or, it may be, a look — would risk their own lives, and put in hazard the lives of those with whom they have lived in friendship. I was brought up with higher principles — and I trust I have never forgotten the obligations they imposed on me. But, Colonel Onslow, I have been insulted — designedly and grossly insulted. I have been goaded on to this point. I have been stung to the soul. I have been accused of all that was dishonourable, mean, and cruel. He and I cannot any longer breathe the same

atmosphere. To-morrow will decide his destiny or mine."

"Montague, I entreat you to let me know the grounds of this unhappy quarrel. You are aware of my intimacy with the Cavendishes — of my knowledge of that particular connection which subsisted between one branch of the family and Sir Francis Leslie. There has been an unfortunate rupture there. Sir Francis is hot—jealous. In short, I guess the origin of the quarrel; but I wish to learn from yourself those circumstances which, as *long as I do not know them, I may* still suppose to be of a nature to be explained away, apologised for, forgiven and forgotten."

"I could have forgiven much from Leslie," said Montague, in a manner betraying far more of agitation than he had yet shown. "I felt for him. I was anxious to be of service to him. I could have allowed a great deal for the bitter spirit of that deforming jealousy, which throws on every thing around it the

odiousness that is proper to itself. I compassionated him. Yes, before you, and in the face of heaven, I avouch, that I did so! What, then, must have been the revulsion of my feelings, Colonel Onslow, when he spurned me from him as one of the meanest and basest of mankind — when he threw back my friendship on my hands, and laughed in scorn, as he did so! It was scarcely in man to bear this as I bore it but I could not bear it for ever: — [illegible] lot is chosen. Listen, and judge [illegible] en us." And Montague commenced a hurried recital of the scene that had taken place between him and Sir Francis. At the conclusion, he said — "You will observe, Colonel Onslow, that I have not, from false delicacy, been tempted in any way to disguise the allusions that were made to Miss Cavendish. I have told you all, every thing."

Onslow was silent for a moment or two. "There can be no question," at last he said, "that the offence given you

by Sir Francis was of such a nature as to call forth, on your part, the feelings of indignation and resentment; and being what it was, it can only have found its origin in momentary madness. Sir Francis must, ere this, have seen his error; and I trust, I hope, he might be induced to offer such an apology as would satisfy the most delicate scruple of your honour"

"I will not affirm," replied Montague, "that I would not receive his apology; the asseveration would be an idle one; feeling as I do, that though the madness of his passions may indeed have urged him on to the offence, and that he may be now comparatively calm, there is still rankling in his heart that sense of imagined injury, that jealous wish for vengeance, which will make him rejoice that it did so. He will congratulate himself that things have come to that crisis, when what he esteems our rivalry shall be closed for ever."

"What he esteems your rivalry? How

then! — with no cause on his part for this quarrel but misapprehension — with no end on yours to pay you for the risk you run, — do you think I can stand by, and make no farther effort to reconcile you to each other? Sir Francis, I confess, has insulted you most deeply — he has wronged you. With you I find the firmness of that imperturbable purpose which I see it will be impossible to subdue: my task must lie with Sir Francis. But, ere I take my leave, you will allow me to introduce you to my friend?"

Captain Montague drew back.

"I see your reluctance," said Onslow, "and I confess it to be natural; yet I request this as a most particular favour. The gentleman you have never seen; but he is one who, from his connection with Sir Francis, is earnestly desirous for the interview."

"Thus solicited," replied Montague, "I cannot choose but follow you."

Onslow passed on, Montague locked the door of the room they quitted, and

they were soon at the head of the staircase. Onslow opened, with a sort of involuntary cautiousness, the drawing-room door. Mr. Cavendish turned on the instant: the dim light of the solitary candle flickered over his face. Montague suddenly stopped: — "Good Heaven! It is Mr. Cavendish!"

"You are right, sir," said Mr. Cavendish, advancing with a quick step, and speaking rapidly — "you are right, Captain Montague. I had hoped that our first introduction to each other would have taken place under pleasanter circumstances than these; but, may I ask, have you ever seen me before?"

"It is probable, indeed, that I may have had that pleasure," said Montague, and he hesitated; "but it was scarcely of that I thought: I knew you from your resemblance to Miss Cavendish."

Mr. Cavendish looked at Onslow. There was much in the look that Onslow understood — something, perhaps, that he did not. To one part alone of that

which he understood, he made reply — "No, Cavendish, I have not succeeded. Captain Montague is immovable. I regret also to add, that he has had deep cause for his resentment."

"May I ask this cause?" said Mr. Cavendish, in a low quick tone. "No one answers me. Onslow, you would tell it me if we were alone.' — Captain Montague, I am a stranger to you; I have no right to demand the favour of your confidence; yet, believe me, it was with no idle motive I came to you in an hour like this: I would not have dared to have done so. I hope I respect every man's feelings, be their influence with me or against me. Yet there are cases —— Gracious Heaven! — Onslow, tell him to trust me. Who am I, that he should not confide in my honour?"

"Who are you, indeed, sir?" said Montague, a slight flush rising to his cheek. "The father of Miss Cavendish; and I shrink back from any embarrassing

allusion to a name, that I honour so entirely as I do hers."

"You may do this, Captain Montague: I entreat you to do it. I am the oldest friend of Sir Francis; I was the friend of his father: I could not answer it to my own conscience were I to stand passive now. Make mention, therefore, if it is necessary, of my child: forget, for a moment, that you are speaking to her father."

"I do not, I cannot forget this," said Montague; "but I feel that, such being your pleasure, my scruples must give way. Colonel Onslow, will you have the kindness to lay before Mr. Cavendish the circumstances that I put you in possession of just now?"

"It will be unnecessary," said Onslow, "that, in so doing, I should dwell long on those points which I believe neither party here present would, just at this moment, feel inclined to discuss. Mr. Cavendish is already acquainted with circumstances which will allow him, in a great measure,

to guess at these had he not been so, he would have hesitated in accompanying me here, and it is this previous knowledge also that inclines him to feel a double, nay, a treble, interest in the affair, and an unconquerable desire to bring it to an amicable termination."

After this short preface Onslow made known to Mr. Cavendish the substance of what had passed in the morning, glancing lightly, and with the greatest delicacy, on those parts of the conversation which had in them a reference to Amelia, and pointing the attention of Mr. Cavendish to the nature and extent of the offence given by Sir Francis. "With him, therefore," he added, "lies now our only hope: — here it has failed us."

"Our hope, then, is as the things that are not," said Mr. Cavendish. "It is impossible that he and I can meet, and equally impossible that either reason or regard of consequences, or considerations of delicacy, feeling — of what he owes to others, to himself — shall obtain the vic-

tory over that state of morbid excitement which presses him on to his undoing. And this is to be the end of all? — God knows, in his early errors I compassionated him. It is not a necessary attribute of human justice to visit with its penalty, or even with its unrelaxing frown, a first offence. I believe that in the course of that experience which has laid open to me, through the medium of action, the windings of many hearts, I have seen in their complicated feelings, their conflicting or their mingling motives, as much to plead in their excuse as to avouch the justice of the warrant that condemned them. I felt, therefore, for Sir Francis, but, think you, Captain Montague, I had no feeling for my child? — Have I your permission to go on?"

"I am but too honoured, Mr. Cavendish, in having this confidence bestowed on me."

"I am going, then, to speak to you candidly. Colonel Onslow is present to bear witness that I confided to him, al-

most immediately on his arrival in this country, my fears that I had been too precipitate in the encouragement I had granted to Sir Francis Leslie's attachment for my daughter. Yet he knows, also, that I permitted not this suspicion to ruffle, for an instant, that current of events which bore on its tide all that was most interesting to my feelings, and dear to my affections. If you ask me why I looked on thus idly as it passed me, I reply, because I felt myself bound in honour to Sir Francis; because the open tenor of his behaviour was unimpeachable; his character frank, confiding, and affectionate. I reflected, also, that the history of a woman's feelings ought, if possible, never to be brought under the judgment of the world; and for this reason, perhaps, more than for any other, I thought it best that things should continue as they were. You will observe, Captain Montague, the sacrifice I made to opinion; but most unfortunate circumstances have caused it to have been made

in vain. The very evil I dreaded is rising up already, in colours infinitely darker, to confound my calculations, to irritate my pride. My child—my only daughter—is to be the sport of men's opinions. This duel will be the watch-word, of which any artful spy upon her honour will possess himself, to come at the most secret recesses, the most guarded passes of her heart. Do you think that she will bear this? Do you think that I will bear it unshrinkingly? No—my fortitude is powerless, when breathed on by a sigh of hers. Her grief—but why do I talk of her grief? That is the lot of human nature; and I would teach her to look up through her tears to God, and God would enable her to bear it. But obloquy, reproach, the thousand falsehoods, the surmises made up of imbecility and envy—Captain Montague, I entreat you have compassion for the feelings of a father, who was only too proud of the treasure Heaven had given him. And this is to be the punishment

of my pride? But it is not, it cannot be irremediable. Reflect on the temporary frenzy in which you found Sir Francis. Reflect on the circumstances which had thus disordered him. Think of Amelia, happy as you saw her last, wretched as you will—but no, you will never see her again. And shall I not regret this circumstance? I, who have heard of you as one whom I felt convinced I should esteem and honour? I, who was anxious for your acquaintance? I, who would court it now, if——"

"Spare me, Mr. Cavendish. You are harrowing up every feeling of my soul. You are placing me on the rack. It lies not with me to advance nor go backward. This concession I make to you. For God's sake, leave me!"

"I must not be thus adjured in vain," said Mr. Cavendish. "I thank you for your concession. I feel its importance. We must lose not a moment in profiting by it. I could have wished the business decided here; but I see—I am conscious

it cannot. It is impossible he can refuse the hold I have over him Onslow, you must compel him to listen to you."—He grasped, with farewell earnestness, the hand of Montague.—"I leave you; and I pray Heaven, that when next we meet, there may be no remains of apprehension in my heart, nor of irritation in yours."

"I wish you good evening, Captain Montague," said Colonel Onslow. "I will see you, or write to you, in an hour's time. By the by," said he, turning to Mr. Cavendish, "I have forgotten, in the hurry of this business, to write to Lord De Beauvoir, and inform him that there is a chance I may not be able to keep my appointment with him tomorrow. This has been unlucky. I have not a moment's time to spare. If I go back to Dover-Street, I lose at least half an hour. What can be done?"

"I should be sorry indeed," said Montague, "if, interesting yourself as you are for me and my concerns, you

should be put to the slightest inconvenience, which I have it in my power to obviate. Let us go down stairs. You can write your note there."

"Ay, so I can; and, Cavendish, you will oblige me by sending one of your men with it."

"Certainly, certainly;" and Montague and his visitors went down stairs.

Onslow seated himself at the writing-table, and began his note to Lord De Beauvoir. A *tête-à-tête* conversation necessarily ensued between Mr. Cavendish and Captain Montague, if conversation that could be called, which consisted of a remark or two uttered almost unconsciously by the speaker, and to which the hearer offered only the semblance of attention. Montague felt that these authorised mockeries of society were out of place; and, emancipating himself suddenly from their shackles, he said, in a tone of painful interest, "I understood, and it was with much regret,

that Miss Cavendish was suffering from illness. I hope she is better."

"She is better, thank God," said Mr. Cavendish.

"I thank God also," said Montague, feelingly. "I had intended doing myself the honour of calling in Hill-Street to-morrow or the next day, if this——"

"What demon of mischief, what imp of evil," said Mr. Cavendish, as he paced the room in agitation, "inspired the idea of your fatal visit to Sir Francis? See, how on a breath, an angry word, lie fortune and its thousand chances! Look how the chain of events is twisted and disordered by the sudden movement of the passions! Heaven, if in thy mercy thou didst not look upon this earth, and compel its acquiescence to thy will, what a chaos would men make of it in their madness!"

At this instant Mr. Cavendish touched with his foot one of the papers that had fallen on the floor. He stooped to

pick it up, and started — it was directed to Miss Cavendish. Recovering himself, however, immediately from his surprise, he handed it with apparent indifference to Captain Montague.

Montague felt at once that the address had been read by Mr. Cavendish. He coloured, and the latter said hastily, "I see you have done, Onslow: well, let us be gone."

"Stay, Mr. Cavendish: hear me, — I must speak to you ere you go. You know for whom that letter was intended you handed to me just now?"

"Excuse me, Captain Montague; we have already trespassed too long upon your time. Perhaps on a future opportunity, — but not at this moment. You are harassed; you have many things to think of, and so, indeed, have we. Good night."

"My dear Cavendish," said Onslow, "what is the matter?"

"O — nothing: I am ready to attend you."

Montague bowed quietly, and with an air of mingled sorrow and displeasure. Mr. Cavendish returned the bow courteously, but coldly. Colonel Onslow lingered in the hall a moment or two after his friend had quitted it; and said, as he shook Montague by the hand, — "We shall meet, I trust, happily to-morrow, when I must ask you a question or two." Montague wrung his hand in reply, and Onslow passed on.

"Cavendish," said Onslow, the instant the door was closed on them, "you met with something to annoy you just now?"

"Enough, indeed, my dear Onslow, have I had this last week, both to annoy me, and probe me to my heart's core; but of this that you allude to, I cannot speak till I am somewhat calmer. I scarcely know my own thoughts as yet. Seek out Sir Francis: — I have a sudden feeling of compassion for him, Onslow. I would even go with you myself, but that I think you will manage things better without me. Say every thing to

him likely to conciliate him; get at his most confidential thoughts, if you can: this business must be sifted. If it is necessary, mention my name — say, if he has grounds for wishing to see me, I will see him. Here then we part. I shall sit up till I hear from you. Your note to Lord De Beauvoir shall be despatched as soon as I reach home."

They parted, — Onslow to pursue his generous efforts for preventing the hostile meeting of Sir Francis and Captain Montague, — Mr. Cavendish to meditate on what had passed.

Every feeling, even those that had most mastered him when in the drawing-room in George-Street, were merged in the suspicion so offensive to his sense of honour, his rectitude, his pride — the suspicion to which his high opinion of his daughter gave a character impossible to define, and inexpressibly painful, that Sir Francis had indeed been secretly injured and betrayed. For what purpose should Montague write to his daughter? at such

a moment too — and on what authority did he write to her, while by every word and action he showed the most guarded caution, the most anxious desire, to impress on Mr. Cavendish the idea that he had looked on her with deference, and with the feeling that she belonged to another? — "It is impossible," said Mr. Cavendish to himself, — "it is impossible that Amelia, my own Amelia, should have acted thus like the weak and vain ones of her sex—should have so deceived the father who adores her: — and yet why did he write? what right had he to do so, unless —— Let me be calm, let me reflect."

It was in vain, however, that Mr. Cavendish sought to be calm, and to reason: the starts of the imagination continually interfered with the forced tranquillity and compelled reflections of the mind. With anxious impatience he watched, after his arrival in Hill-Street, the slow progress of the time. The hour crept on: there

came no message from Onslow. At length a note was brought in to him.

"My dear Cavendish, — I have not been able to see Sir F——. He had gone out, no one knew whither, nor did they look for his return. We can do nothing further, this night, at least

"Yours, faithfully,

"A. O."

Mr. Cavendish, with a sort of desperate smile, retired to his chamber. Before dawn he quitted it again, and, wrapped in a thick riding-coat, walked to Dover-Street. Onslow, he was informed, had just gone out. In all the torment of suspense, Mr. Cavendish retraced his steps to his own house, and shut himself up in his library. He had been there about two hours, when a knock was heard at the door: he started from his chair, — he stopped his breath, — he felt he was to know every thing in a moment: — that

moment came. The following were the contents of the second note from Colonel Onslow :—

" They have met — Sir F. is dangerously, if not mortally, wounded. Captain M. sets off for Ramsgate in an hour on his way to Ostend. I dare not come to you. Be at my house at twelve o'clock.

" A. O."

Mr. Cavendish had not time either to think or to feel. A step approached the door — he knew it to be that of Amelia.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square

Lightning Source UK Ltd.
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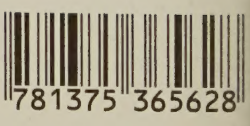
UKHW020653170121
377160UK00005B/201



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